PLANTING IDEAS • BEAUTIFUL GARDENS • EXPERT ADVICE

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

42 PAGES OF BEAUTIFUL GARDENS

New traditions

from classic English flower gardens to Moorish design

INCLUDING

Woodland planting
in a small city garden

The flower garden
inspired by William Robinson

No Floral Foam

Cut flowers go eco-conscious

The most beautiful penstemon

for constant colour

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EDITOR'S LETTER

The Radicepura Garden Festival in Sicily opened in April. To those more familiar with the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, this is a different type of garden event where the gardens remain in situ for six months and then are judged at the end of this period. The festival is biennial and the key designs remain permanently in place. Visit this year and as well as seeing Andy Sturgeon's Layers (new for 2019, with exquisite planting and curved walls based on storage leaves of bulb pushing into life when conditions are right) you can also enjoy James Basson's Alpheus and Arethusa from 2017 and see how it has evolved. This way of exploring design and planting ideas over time feels in keeping with the zeitgeist and is very elegant. It captures the essence of gardening as creativity paired with time, and feels forward-thinking.

Spilsbury Farm in Wiltshire is a collaboration between a botanist and a garden designer that takes both the narrow and the long view. The garden of Dr James Compton and Tania Compton is a sensual delight where mown paths run away from the house through loose meadow planting and some esoteric treasures. The garden is underpinned by good structure with cubes of clipped hornbeam and trees, as well as copses of liquidambar, spindle and guelder rose, and a nut walk underplanted with ferns. While Jamie is focused on close scrutiny – as a botanist he will visit a plant up to three times a day while he is studying it – Tania provides the broad vision. This is a garden that has evolved, and views revealed and concealed over time.

As the No Floral Foam movement gathers pace, in Kitted Out this month we share the best new kit for arranging cut flowers sustainably. Commonly known as Oasis, floral foam is the green floristry brick invented in the 1950s that has been used in cut flower displays ever since. It is now recognised as a single-use plastic containing non-biodegradable particles that will eventually contaminate our soils and water. Greener alternatives for arranging cut flowers include pin frogs, bud vases, tulipieres and chicken wire (with responsibly sourced moss); all are befitting of seasonal, home-grown cut flowers.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

RICHARD BLOOM

Spilsbury Farm in Wilstshire combines abundant meadow planting with an underlying structure, page 38.

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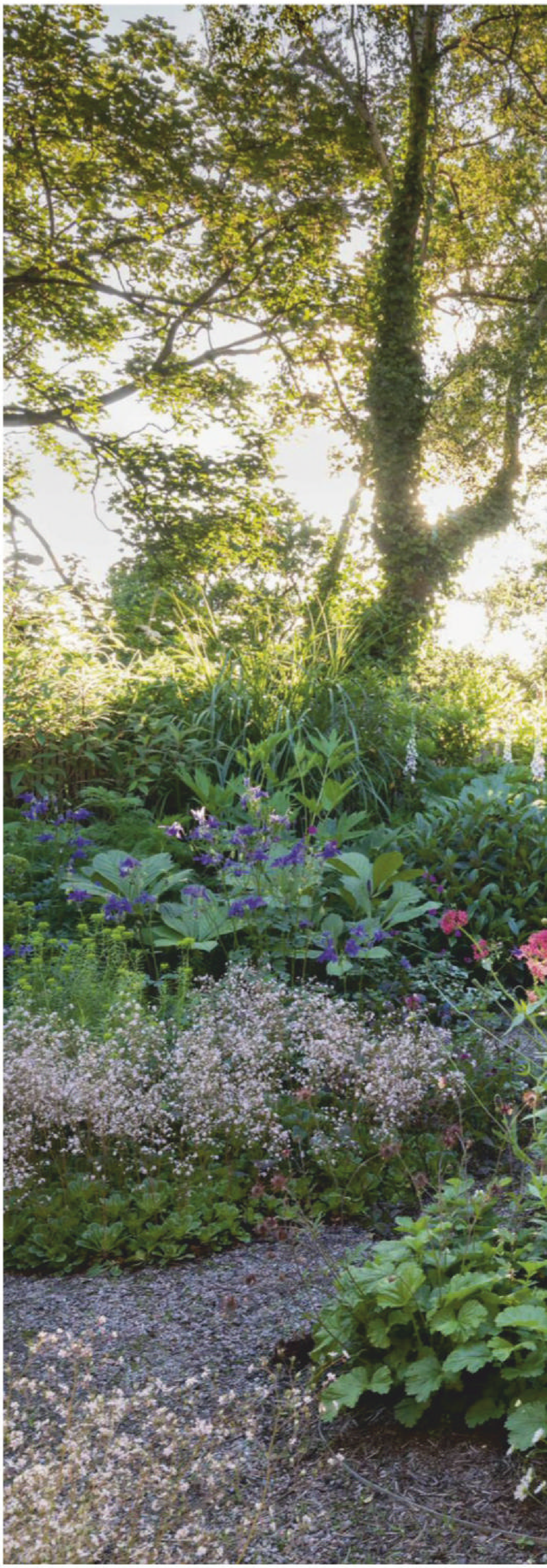
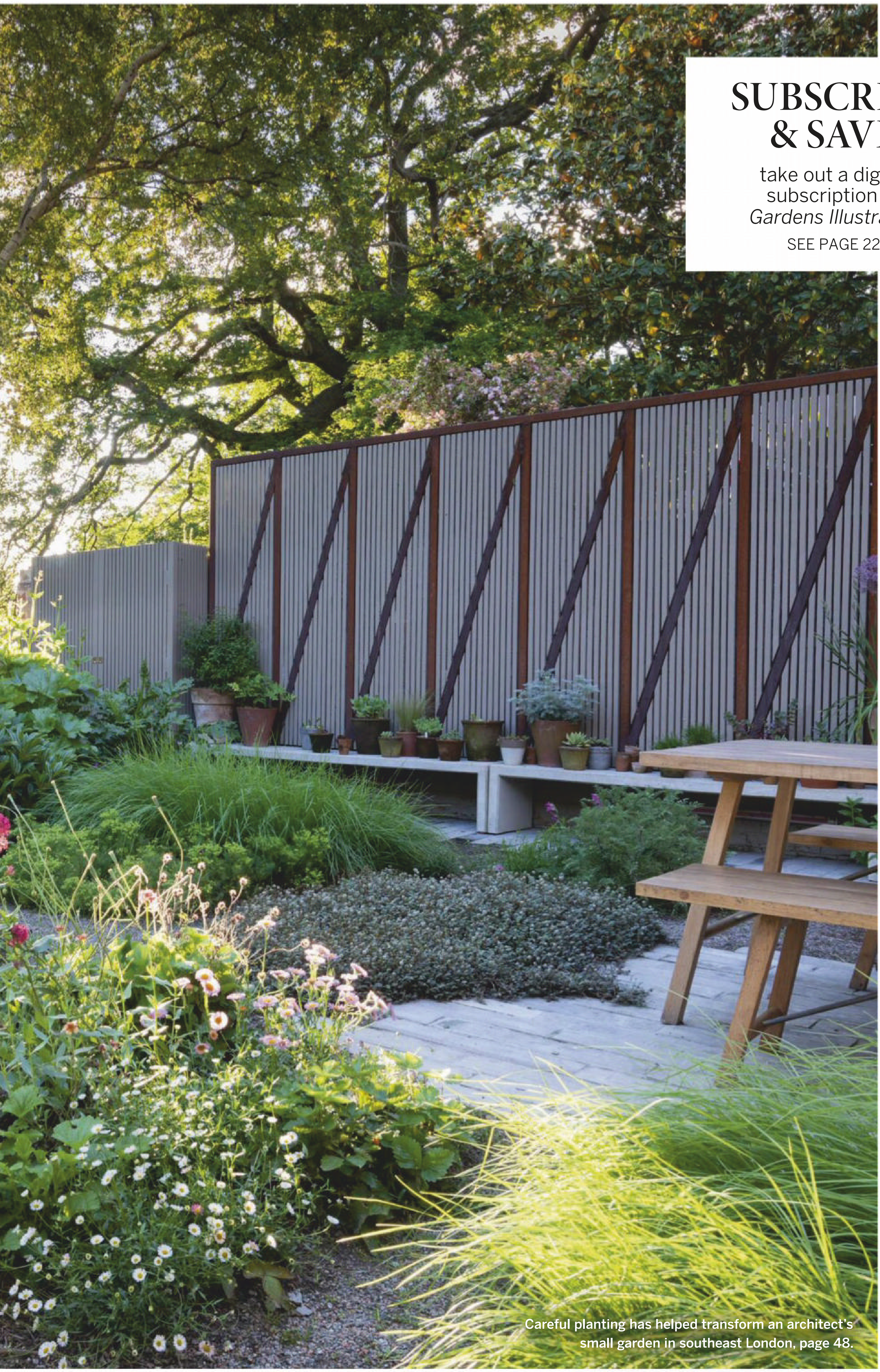


RICHARD BLOOM



Careful planting has helped transform an architect's small garden in southeast London, page 48.

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COVER IMAGE

Spilsbury Farm
by Sabina Rüber

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- Join us for our long weekend in Normandy with an expert-guided tour of outstanding gardens – page 10
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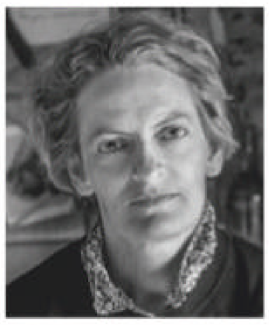

HOWARD SOOLEY

KENDRA WILSON
Kendra visits an architect's garden in London, page 48. *"There is something very calming about a small outdoor space when the soft and hard landscaping work together this well."*

RACHEL WARNE
Rachel photographs an Oxford garden, page 74. *"The moment I walked into this garden I became instantly relaxed. Angus has created a serene space with beautiful planting. Absolute bliss."*

CLARE COULSON
Clare visits the Old Rectory, page 62. *"It was a really inspiring garden to visit, not least because David manages most of it single handed and has the drive to continue pushing it forward."*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JAMES BASSON
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

FERGUS GARRETT
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

ANNA PAVORD
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

DAN PEARSON
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

SARAH PRICE
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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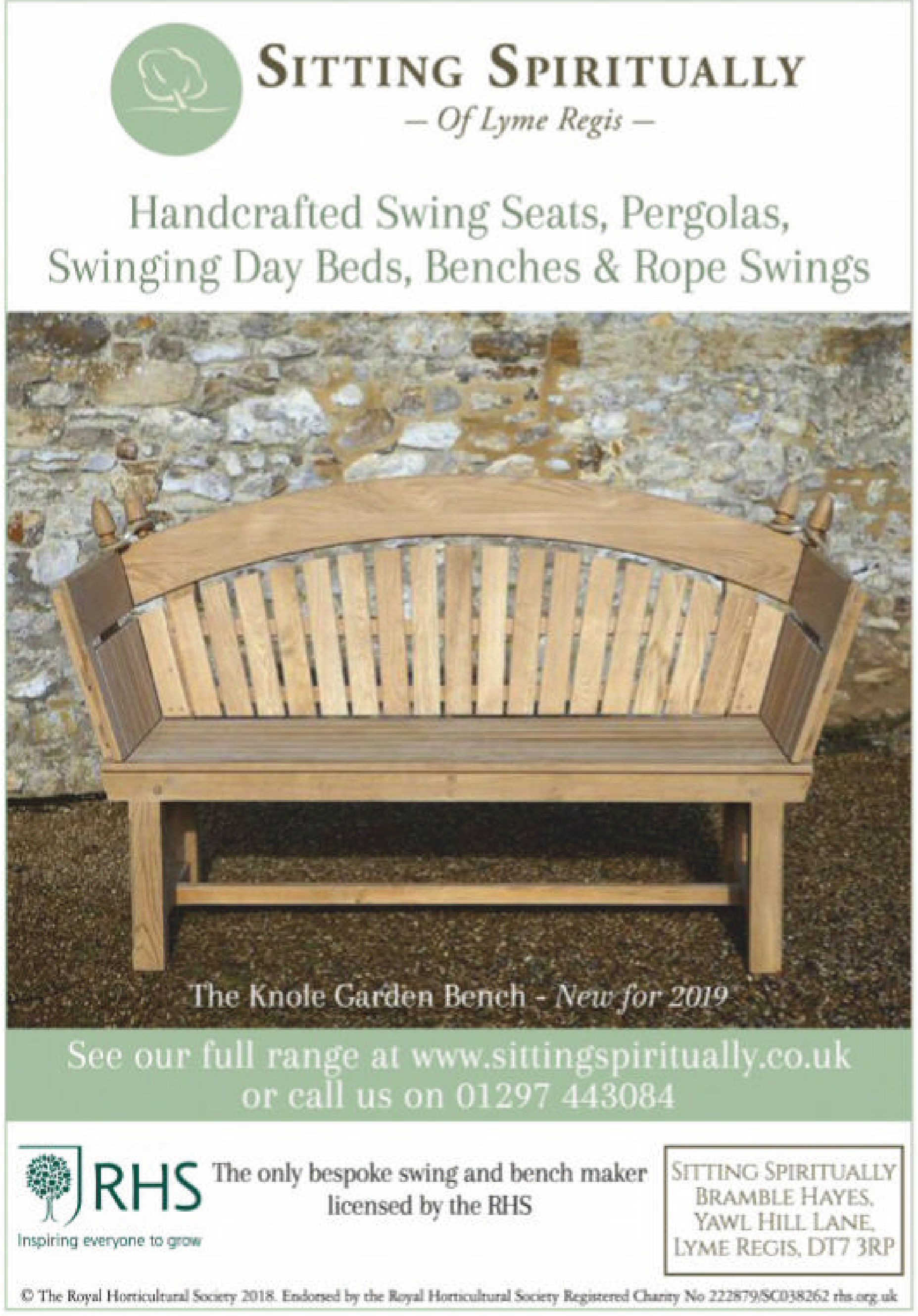

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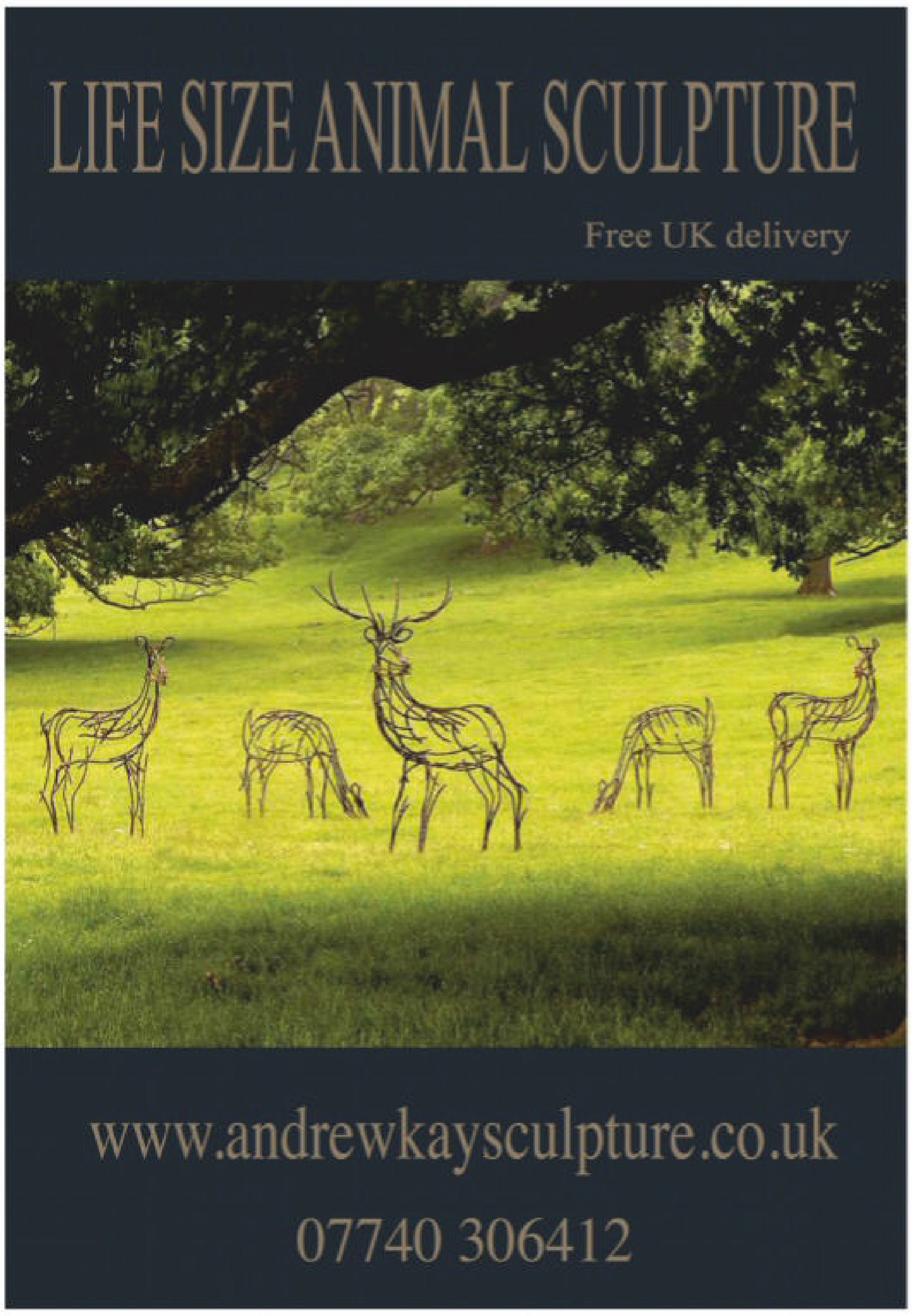

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THE SPEAKERS

Jinny Blom is an eclectic designer whose gardens include a Chelsea gold-winning show garden for Prince Harry, a rugged, naturalistic estate in Scotland, a wildlife-focussed retreat in Kenya and romantic Cotswold manor house gardens. Her recent book *The Thoughtful Gardener* called for a more intelligent approach to garden design.

Mark Straver and Robin Wallis set up Hortus Loci in 2011. The nursery has become known for its expertise in sourcing a wide range of plants from around the world and working with designers to supply plants for their show gardens in particular at RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Jinny Blom's design for the garden at Temple Guiting Manor offers an ebulliently romantic space that sits perfectly within its Cotswold location.

SATURDAY 22 JUNE 2019

MIDSUMMER GARDEN SUPPER CLUB WITH JINNY BLOM

We celebrate the long summer evenings with a special seasonal dinner and talk from award-winning designer Jinny Blom at The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci

Hosted by *Gardens Illustrated* and the expert plantspeople at **The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci** in Hampshire, our midsummer celebration starts in the late afternoon. There will be time for refreshments when you arrive before taking a tour of the nursery, to take a peek at some of the plants being grown ready for their starring roles at this year's RHS Hampton Court Palace Show. There will also be the opportunity to browse the nursery and make your own plant selections before enjoying a pre-dinner drink. Dinner will be prepared for us by the Hobo.co artisan kitchen, to reflect the season and all that midsummer has to offer, with fresh flavours inspired by local produce and a nod to traditional Scandinavian celebrations. The evening's finale will be a talk from award-winning designer **Jinny Blom**, who will tell us about her very varied recent commissions. She'll discuss her approach to planting design, art and architecture and some of the projects both here in the UK and abroad that she is currently working on.

ANDREW MONTGOMERY; © NATHAL E JOUAN

EVENT DETAILS

Price £100 per person

Date Saturday 22 June, 2019.
Venue The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci,
Hound Green, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8LQ.
Programme
4.30pm Refreshments and welcome introduction
5pm Tour of the nursery
5.45pm Return to the plant centre for drinks and opportunity to buy plants
6.30pm Dinner served
8.15pm Talk from award-winning designer Jinny Blom
9pm Concludes

Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event. Booking is essential. Please advise us of any dietary or accessibility requirements.

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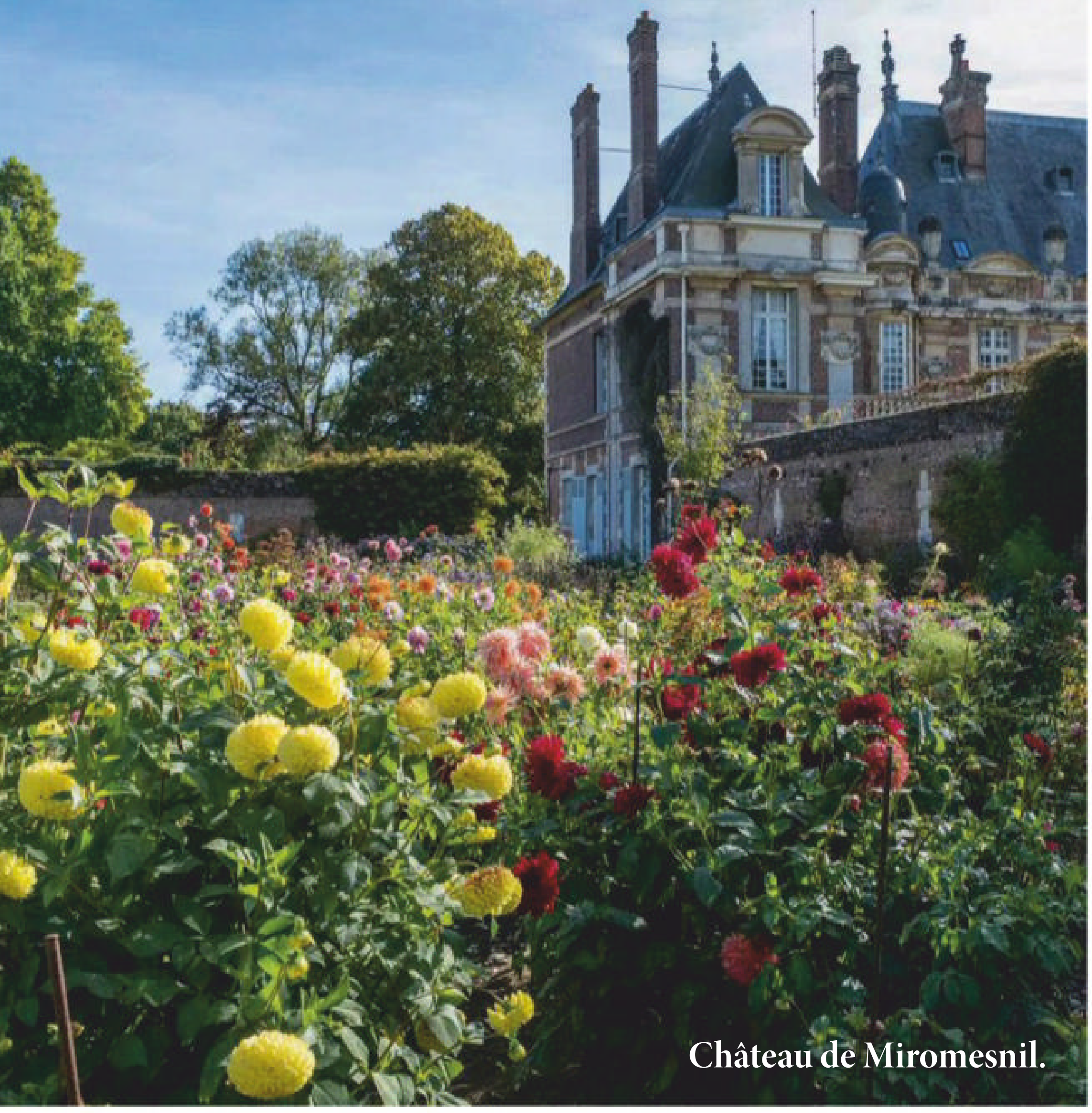

Château de Miromesnil.

Le Jardin Plume.

27-30 SEPTEMBER 2019

GARDENS OF NORMANDY

Take a long weekend to Normandy's La Côte d'Albâtre to discover exceptional gardens from the historic to the newly created

TOUR LEADER

Horticulturist **Maïté Delmas** has managed plant collections at the botanic gardens in Kew, Bordeaux and Paris. She is an active promoter of the international network Botanic Gardens of France, and was awarded the Légion d'Honneur for her 36 years of service at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturell. She is joined by Sophie Piebenga, historic gardens expert.

We travel to northern France for a four-day tour of some of Normandy's best-loved gardens. Our base in Dieppe puts us within easy reach of the village of **Varengeville-sur-Mer**, which boasts five exceptional gardens, including the gardens of **Bois des Moutiers**, a Lutyens/Jekyll collaboration where we will also be invited to view the house with a tour by the owners. **Le Vasterival** is the creation of the late Princess Greta Sturdza who created a woodland garden in the Gardenesque style. The Princess famously continued with the development of her garden right up to her death at the age of 94 in 2009. Other gardens include **Château de Miromesnil** with a charming walled potager, **Shamrock** with its remarkable collection of hydrangeas, **Jardin Agapanthe**, a densely planted garden defined by a powerful structure and **Le Jardin Plume**, where rustic charm meets French formality. As a finale to the trip, we also include a visit to an exceptional, private, modern woodland garden, which has been described as 'the most exciting new garden in Europe' – ensuring that our trip to Normandy is a delight for all garden lovers.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing: £2,160 (a single supplement of £200 is levied by the hotel).

Price includes: three nights accommodation at Hotel la Presidence, Mercure; three lunches, three evening meals with wine at local restaurants in Dieppe plus, return tickets on Eurostar and all transport during the tour. If you wish to travel independently to join the tour in Dieppe, please deduct £100 and contact the office to discuss joining arrangements. The price does not include hotel extras or travel insurance.

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DIG IN

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

TESSA BUNNEY

HOME GROWN

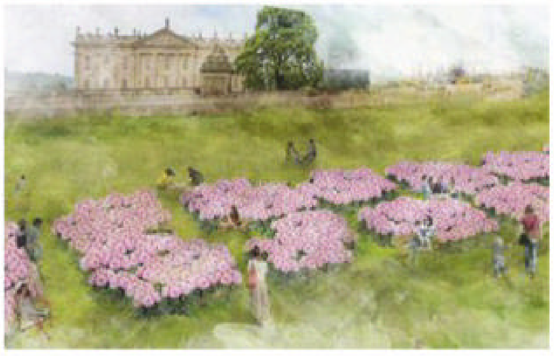
Rediscover the beauty and variety of the British flower market in British Flowers Week, 10-16 June, supported by the Flower Market at New Covent Garden Market. Since the 1970s we've become increasingly dependent on wholesale blooms from the Netherlands and beyond, importing hot-house blooms out of season. British Flowers Week is an attempt to reverse this trend, by showcasing the natural charm and freshness of locally grown flowers. Many seasonally grown British flowers still have their original heady scents, an asset that is often grown out of species used in large-scale flower production. Support British Flowers Week by visiting events across the UK, from an exhibition of photographs (shown above) by Tessa Bunney of British flower farmers at Oriel Colwyn in north Wales, to innovative floral installations from five of Britain's top florists at the Garden Museum in London. **britishflowersweek.com**

News

COMPILED BY HANNAH TRIBE

SEASONAL DISPLAY

The work of Piet Oudolf is explored in a new documentary by award-winning film maker Thomas Piper. Filmed over a year, *Five Seasons* immerses viewers in Oudolf's designs, including his own garden, Hummelo, in the Netherlands and delves into his sources of inspiration. The documentary also follows the design and planting of what Oudolf considers his best work yet, the perennial meadow at Hauser & Wirth in Somerset (shown above). The film goes on general release at Showcase Cinemas across the UK on 14 June. **fiveseasonsmovie.com**



Delightful dahlias

RHS Chatsworth Flower Show opens on 5 June with a busy schedule of events and blooming displays. Following on from the success of last year's river of cosmos, and inspired by the parterres of Chatsworth House, the team at Chatsworth has been planting 6,000 *Dahlia* (Dalina Maxi Series) to create a dazzling display of lilac and white. These summer flowers will be in full, majestic, bloom during the show so it promises to be a sight to remember. 5-9 June. For ticket information go to **rhs.org.uk**

TOOLS FOR LIFE

Dutch tool maker Sneeboer is renowned for its design and high quality. This year the company has gone back to heritage techniques to make a limited-edition line of garden tools. Its skilled craftspeople use a strong brown core of ash and an expert drying process to make sturdy and long-lasting handles. The handle is lightly sanded and oiled, and robust stainless-steel blades are added. The Vintage Range is available as a set of six long-handled spades and forks, including an ergonomically designed digging fork and a nifty border spade, or as individual tools with prices starting at €131.75 for a pointed spade. ***sneeboer.com***

CHATSWORTH IMAGE: RHS

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ROYAL TEA

HRH The Prince of Wales's gardens at Highgrove feature on the new Royal Garden China range. Topiary, fountains and Highgrove House are accompanied by arching ferns and climbing roses in delicate, hand-gilded decorations. Soaring birds reminiscent of the classic Willow pattern design, a menagerie of earth-bound fauna and a scattering of bees complete the design. Each piece is made from fine bone china at a family run Staffordshire pottery. Prices start at £14.95 for a milk jug, while the tea cup and saucer shown costs £24.95. ***highgrovegardens.com***

Natural aesthetic

Discover the inspiration behind of the work of William Morris at the National Trust's Standen House and Garden in Sussex. *Inspired by Nature* looks at the techniques Morris & Co employed in its fabrics and wallpapers, from initial plans and drawings to woodblocks used for printing wallpaper and even a recreation of the company's original showroom. The Beale family, who owned Standen House in the late 19th century, used many Morris & Co furnishings in their Arts and Crafts house, including this Trellis wallpaper in the hall. The exhibition also extends into the garden, with the opportunity to see some of the plants from which William Morris drew inspiration, such as rose and honeysuckle. **nationaltrust.org.uk**

NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES JAMES DOBSON

READERS ENJOY 20% OFF WOBURN ABBEY GARDEN SHOW

The Woburn Abbey Garden Show celebrates its tenth anniversary this year with a programme of events across the weekend of 22-23 June. Pippa Greenwood and Adam Frost (shown right) will be presenting talks, demonstrations and Q&A sessions along with a host of other horticultural experts. Guided garden tours will give visitors insights into the landscaped grounds with their links to Humphry Repton, and there is a plant village full of nurseries with stunning plant displays. The nursery and innovate trade stands will be assessed for the Woburn Abbey Garden Show Award by some prestigious judges, including garden designer James Alexander-Sinclair. Readers of *Gardens Illustrated* can enjoy this weekend with 20 per cent off the general admission ticket, booked in advance, using code GI2019. **woburnabbey.co.uk**

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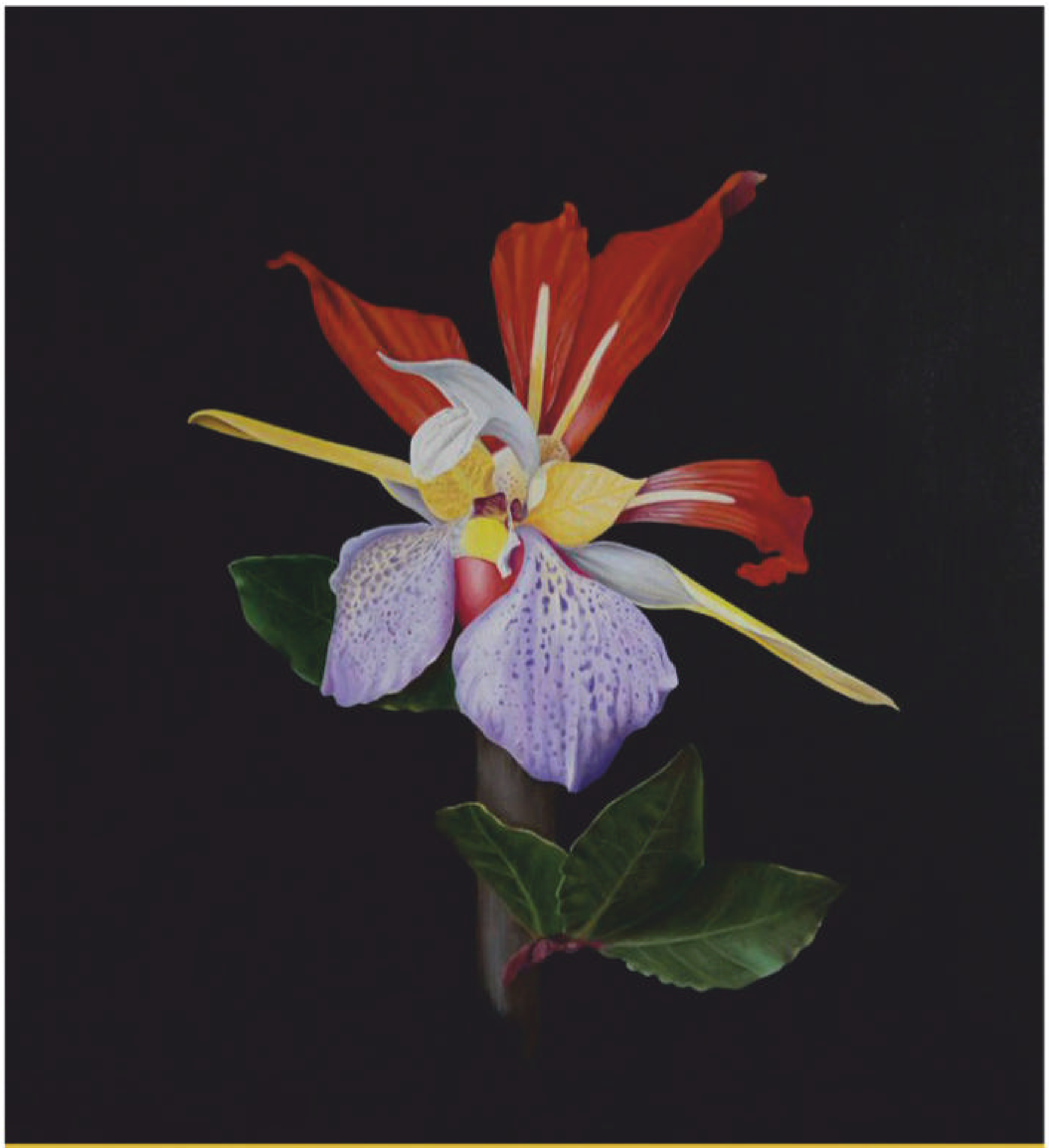

Natural selection

American artist Brandy Kraft paints fantastical images of flowers. She borrows petals, stigmas and stamens from every kind of plant to create surprising and colourful imagined blooms, such as her *Orchilaurus upsaliensis*, shown above. Each of these creations is given a firm rooting with new binomial nomenclature that reflects the elements of species she recreates. You can see her creations at a new exhibition, *Natura Curiosa*, held in the very appropriate setting of Linnés Hammarby in Sweden, the museum in the former home of the botanist and creator of the system of binomial nomenclature, Carl Linnaeus. Until 14 July, 11am-5pm. **linneuppsala.se**

COLD COMFORT

The bid to restore the iconic glasshouses at Chelsea Physic Garden in London has received a substantial boost by winning funds from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Since their erection in 1902, the glasshouses have become home to some of the rarest sub-tropical species, as well as ferns, succulents and carnivorous plants. Despite the elegant structures being originally forged from sturdy cast iron and teak, the age of the materials has made them fragile and in need of repair and conservation. As well as restoring the exterior of the glasshouses, improvements will be made on the interiors to allow easier accessibility for visitors with disabilities. The planned developments will ensure that the historic and scientifically significant plant collections will be protected and enjoyed well into the future. **chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk**

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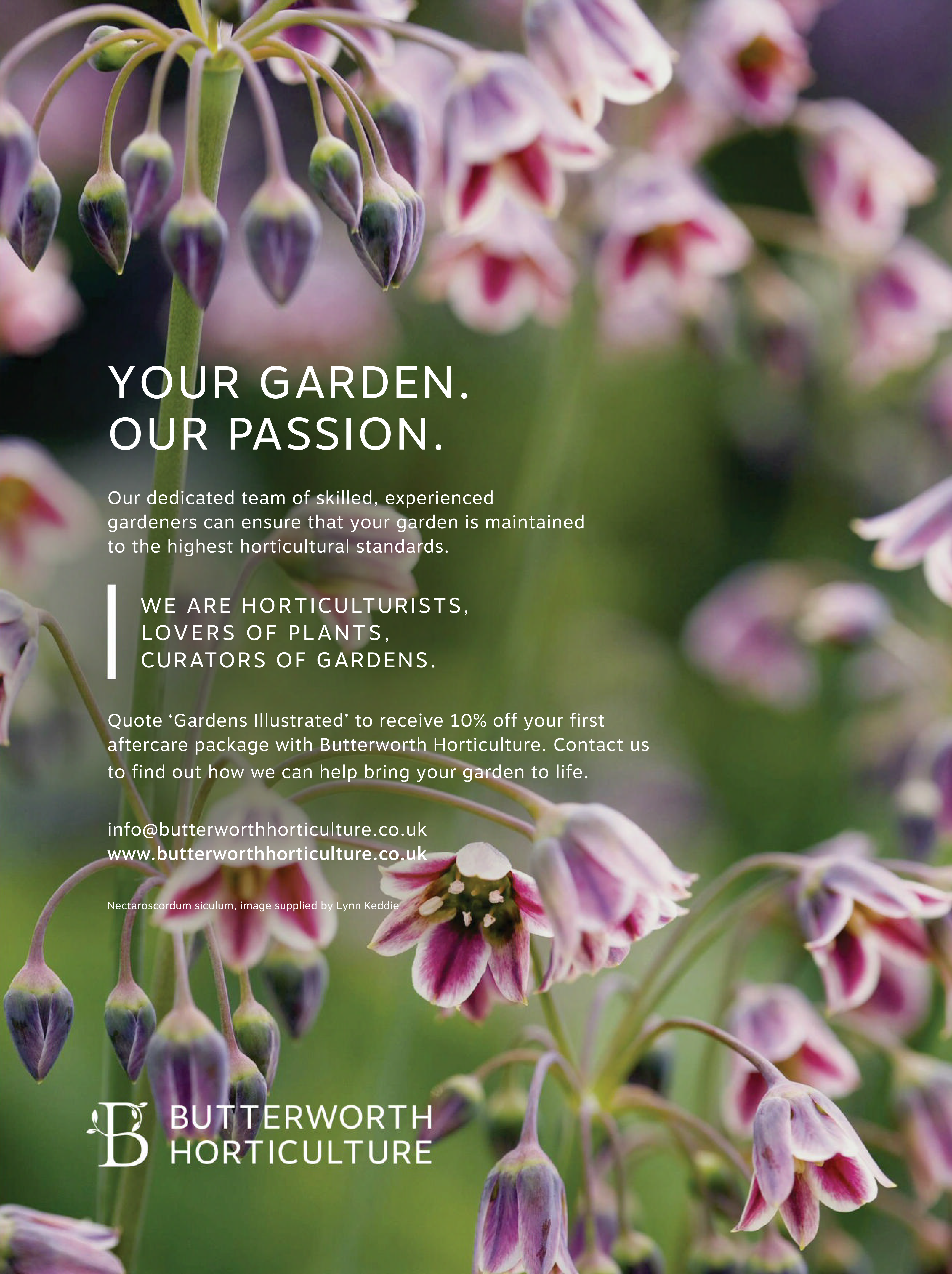
ORCHILAURUS UPSALIENSIS, BRANDY KRAFT



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Nectaroscordum siculum, image supplied by Lynn Keddie

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❶ Buckfast Abbey Garden Fayre
Get the chance to ask a question to a panel of garden experts, including Toby Buckland, and Charlotte Rathbone, at the abbey'ws second garden show. With garden talks and stalls of plants, garden ornaments, and rural crafts and tools. 1 June, 10am-5pm. Free entry. Buckfast Abbey, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0EE. Tel 01364 645500, buckfast.org.uk

❷ Beardless Iris Day
Learn more about these dazzling and low-maintenance plants at this Beardless Iris Society, event. Includes three morning talks, and a visit to the National Collection of Siberian Irises at Aulden Farm. 1 June, from 9.30am, £20, including lunch and refreshments. Hopelands, Weobley Village Hall, Weobley, Herefordshire HR4 8RZ. Tel 01568 720129, beardlessiris.org

❸ Open Gardens Evening at the Charterhouse
Take a rare opportunity to visit the gardens of London's Charterhouse. This relaxed evening event, in association with the National Open Garden Scheme, will leave guests free to walk around the gardens and enjoy an informal barbecue. 5 June, 6-9pm. £5. The Charterhouse, Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6AN. Tel 020 3818 8873, thecharterhouse.org

❹ *Contours* Exhibition
Discover the versatility and beauty of wood at *Contours*, an exhibition of Wycliffe Stutchbury's mosaiced landscapes (shown) and Fritz Baumann's carved vessels, which describe the imperfect repetition of nature. 6 June – 7 September, Tuesday to Saturday, 11am-6pm. 1-5 Needham Road, London W11 2RP. Tel 020 7243 0782, flowgallery.co.uk

❺ London's Open Squares Weekend
This year's selection of some 130 gardens participating in London's Open Squares weekend includes the new Islamic Gardens at the Aga Khan Centre, King's Cross (shown), an Adam Frost-designed roof garden at The Passage, SW1, and The Oasis Urban Farm in Waterloo, with a walled garden designed by Dan Pearson. 8-9 June. opensquares.org/2019

❻ George Rowlett: Paintings of Sarah Price's Garden
Vibrant impressions of designer Sarah Price's Victorian walled garden by artist George Rowlett, painted over a 15-day period last summer, will be on display at London's Garden Museum. 11 June – 4 August, 10.30am-5pm. The Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB. Tel 020 7401 8865, gardenmuseum.org.uk

❼ The Bishop's Palace Country Garden Festival
There will be talks from Chris Beardshaw and Tamsin Westhorpe, stalls from specialist nurseries and garden tours to take you behind the scenes of the historic Bishop's Palace Gardens. 14-16 June The Bishop's Palace, Wells, Somerset BA5 2PD. Tel 01749 988111, bishopspalace.org.uk

❽ The Smart Meter Garden at RHS Wisley
Meet the designer Matthew Child who will preview his design for The Smart Meter Garden at next month's RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival. 20 June, 6.30-8pm. £35. RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 224234, rhs.org.uk

❾ Garden Days Out Hanham Court and Allt-y-bela
Discover the magic of two special gardens. Starting with the sensitively restored surroundings of Hanham Court in Bristol before going on to visit the striking gardens of designer Arne Maynard at Allt-y-bela in Monmouthshire. 20 June, £120, including lunch and transport. Tel 0117 317 9874, gardendaysout.com

❿ Midsummer Mown Maze
A new midsummer maze, based on a historic maze design from a book in the collections at Waddesdon Manor and mowed into the grass below the parterre, opens at the Rothschild house and gardens in Buckinghamshire on 21 June. Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0JH. Tel 01296 820414, waddesdon.org.uk

⓫ Roses at Lowther Castle
Enjoy a behind the scenes tour of Lowther Castle's ambitious rose garden with head gardener Martin Ogle. The gardens have been designed by Dan Pearson, based on a series of poems by William Morris. 27 June, from 1.30pm. £20 including refreshments. Lowther Castle, Lowther, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2HH. Tel 01931 712192, lowthercastle.org

⓬ RHS Master of Horticulture Online
Apply now for the RHS Master of Horticulture (MHort), starting in October. Aimed at professionals who would like to take the next step in their horticultural education, the online, degree level course, aims to develop managerial skills and industry knowledge. Applications open until 26 July. Tel 07715 960238, rhs.org.uk/mhort

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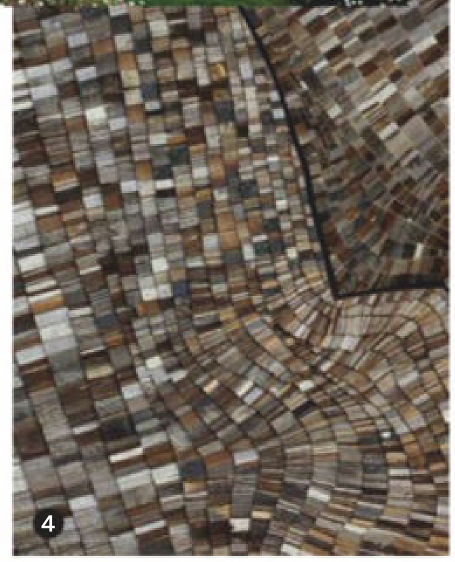
CLAIRE DAVIES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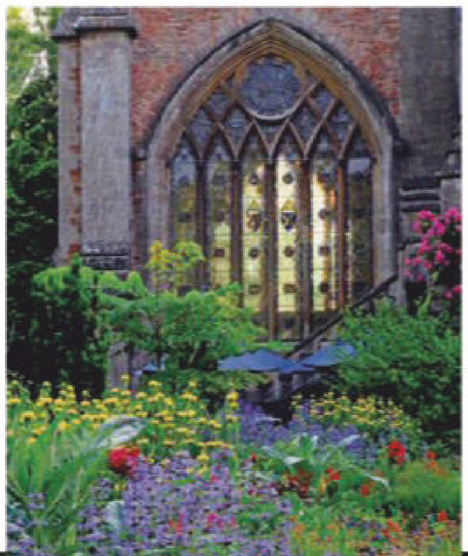
AGA KHAN CENTRE, LISA BARR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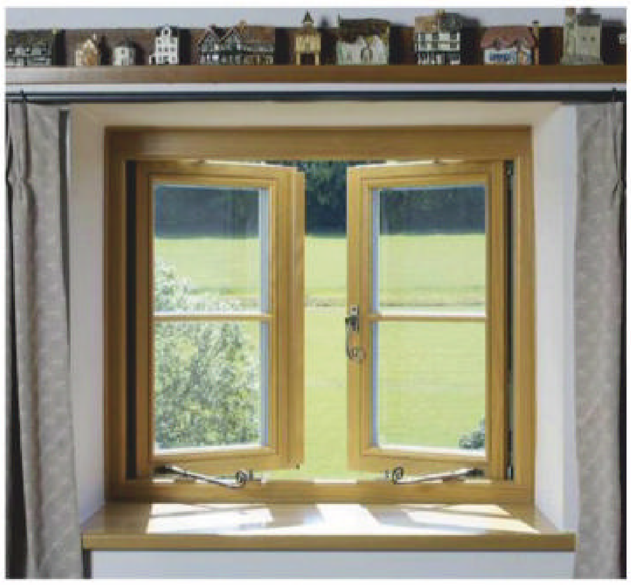

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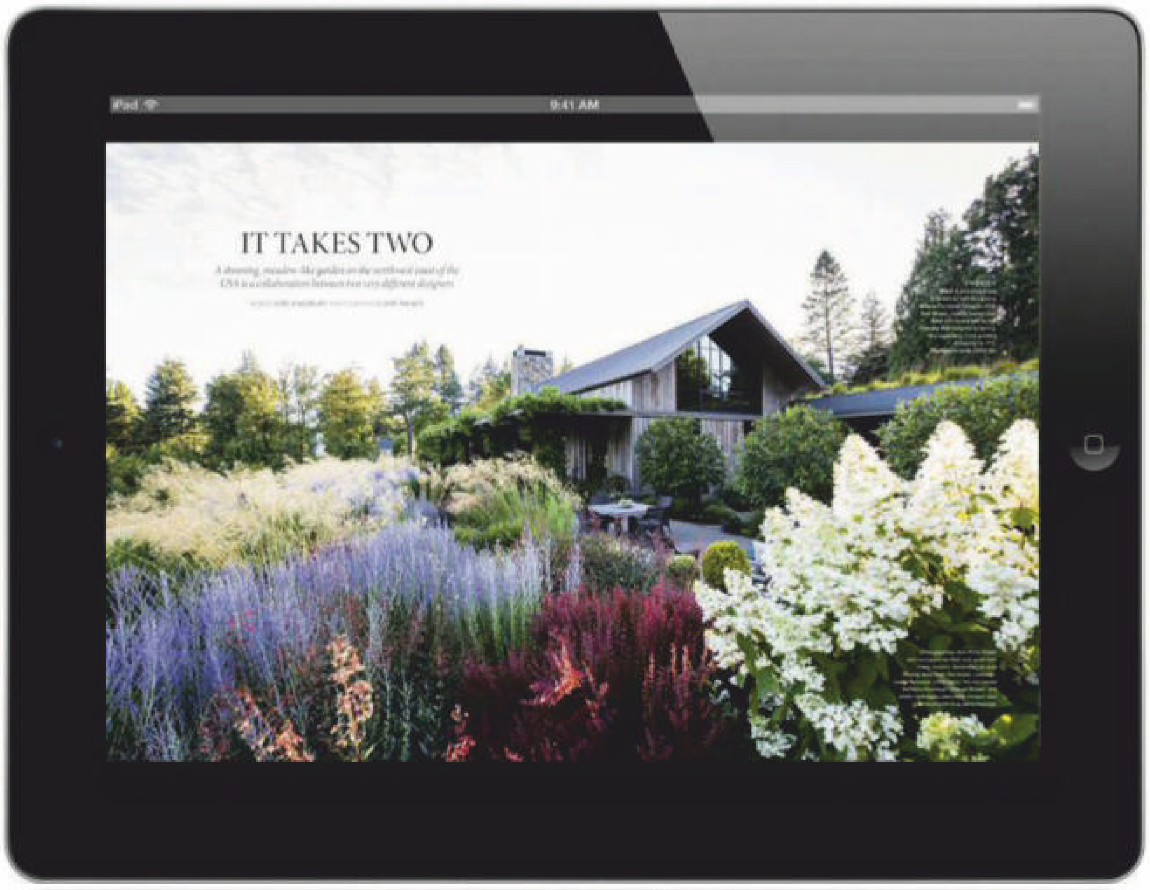
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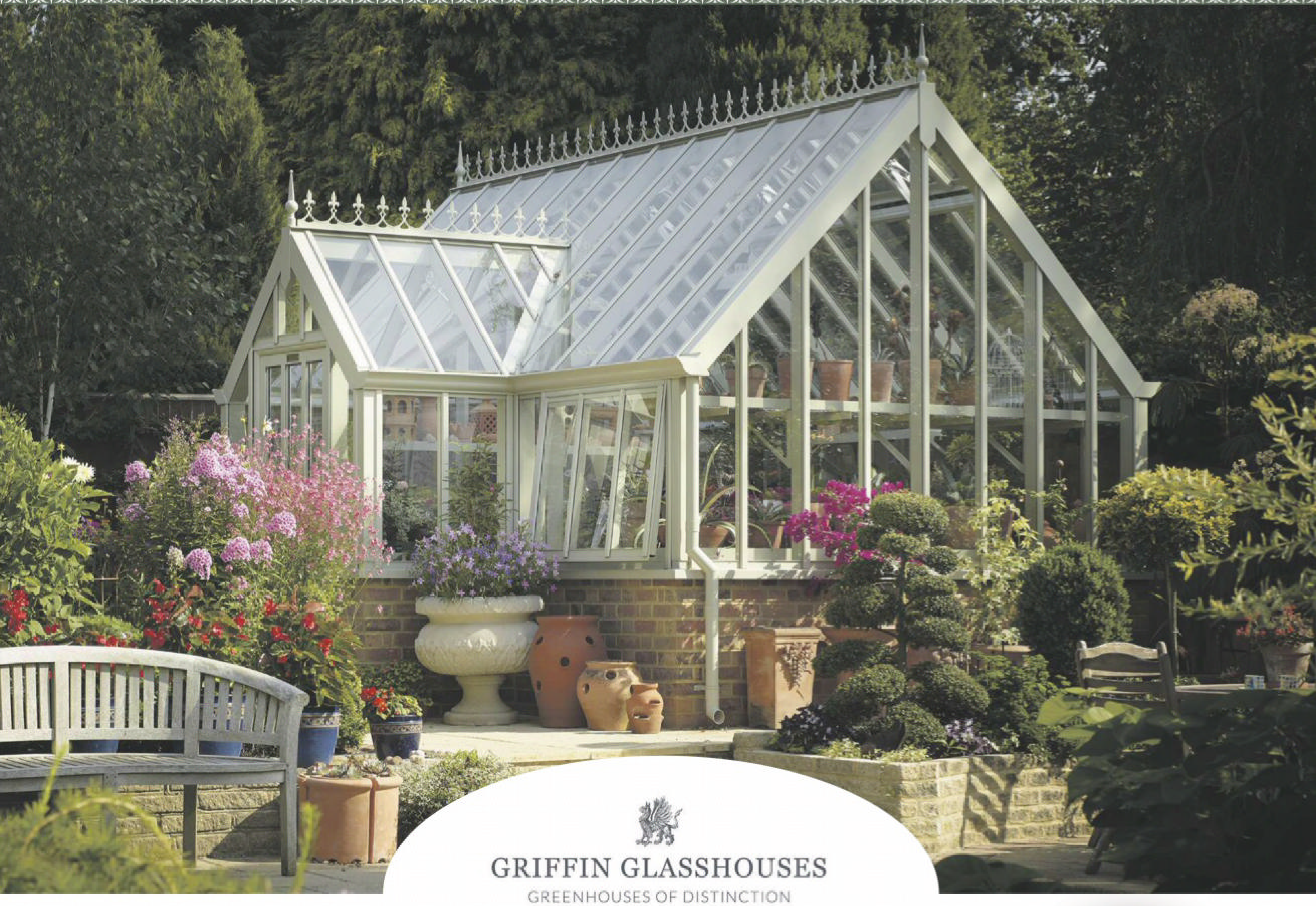

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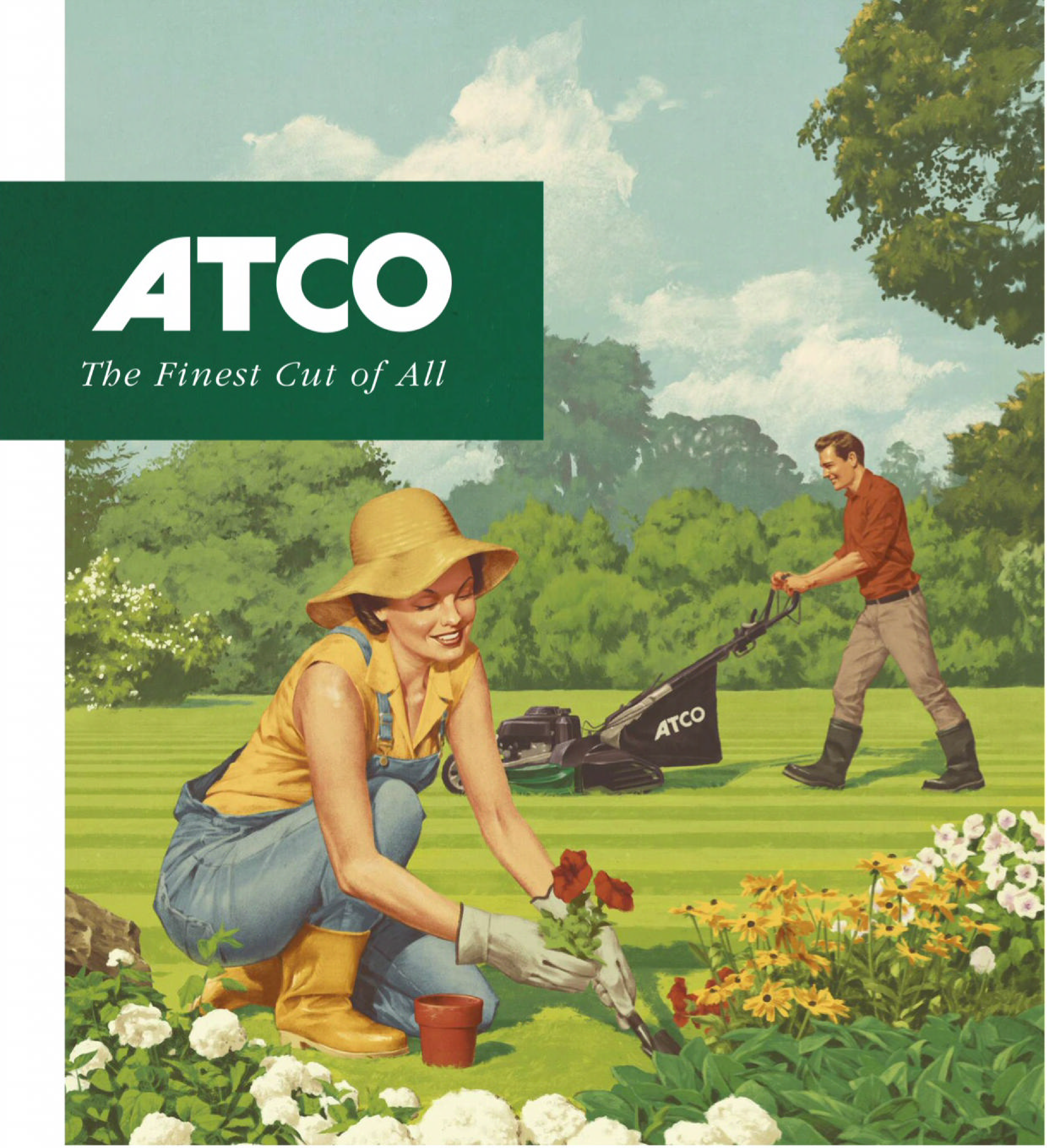
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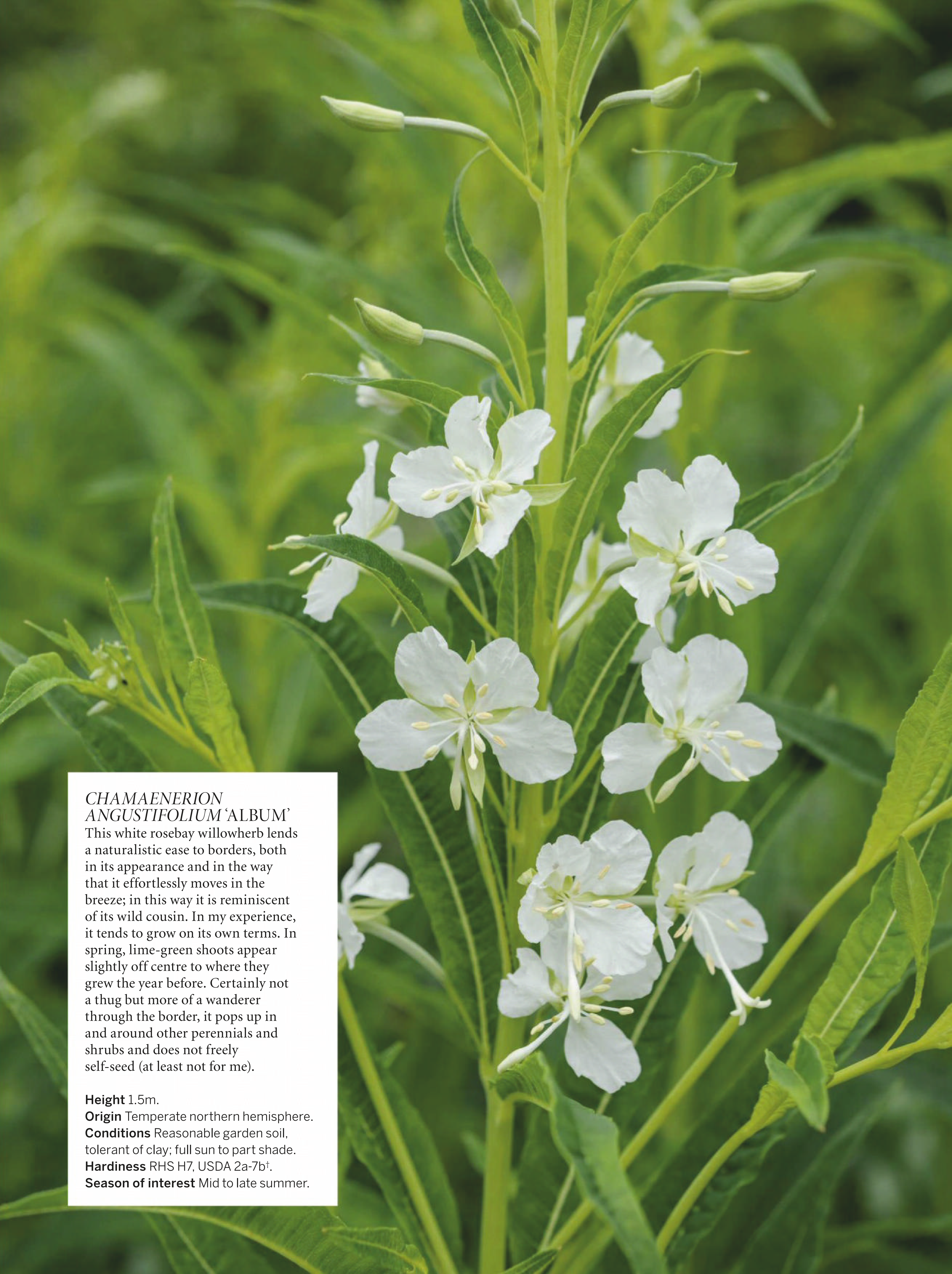


CHAMAENERION ANGUSTIFOLIUM 'ALBUM'

This white rosebay willowherb lends a naturalistic ease to borders, both in its appearance and in the way that it effortlessly moves in the breeze; in this way it is reminiscent of its wild cousin. In my experience, it tends to grow on its own terms. In spring, lime-green shoots appear slightly off centre to where they grew the year before. Certainly not a thug but more of a wanderer through the border, it pops up in and around other perennials and shrubs and does not freely self-seed (at least not for me).

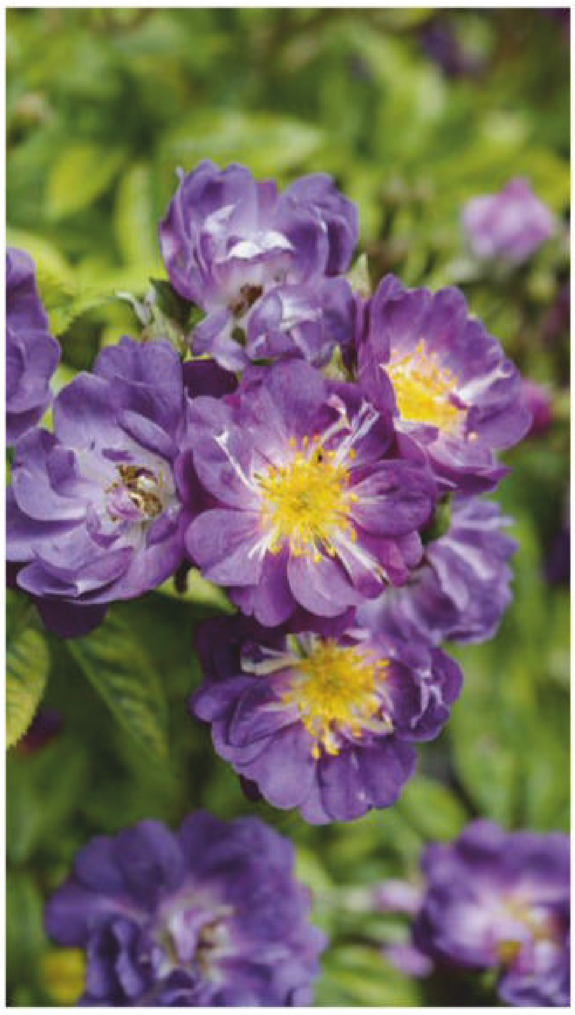
Height 1.5m.
Origin Temperate northern hemisphere.
Conditions Reasonable garden soil, tolerant of clay; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 2a-7b[†].
Season of interest Mid to late summer.

Tom Brown
is head gardener
at West Dean Gardens
westdean.org.uk

JUNE PLANTS

As spring morphs into early summer, Tom finds much to recommend from an usual rose to a sumptuous poppy, and a delicate and useful, powder-blue geranium

WORDS TOM BROWN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



ROSA 'VEILCHENBLAU'

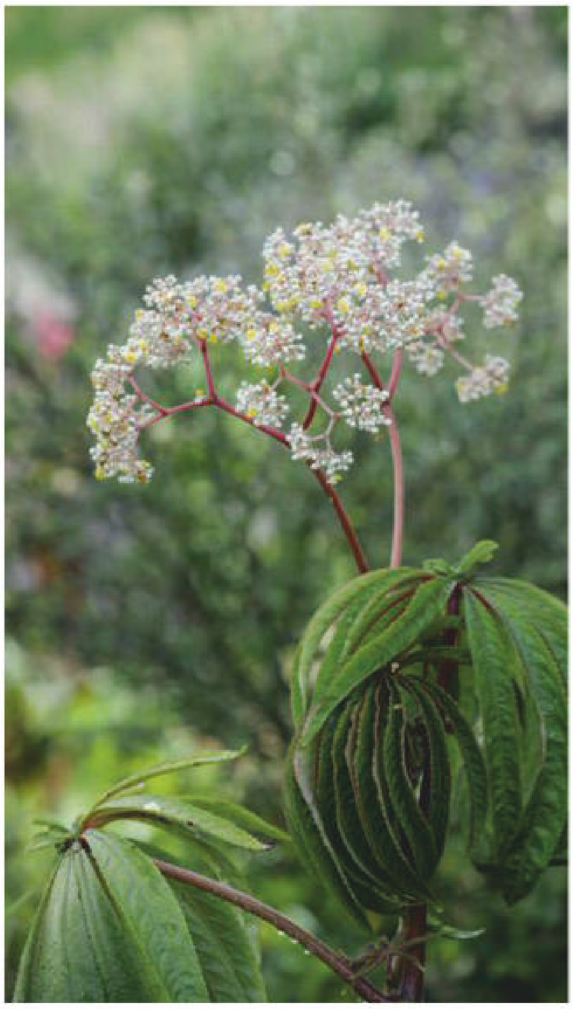
I adore this rose not just for its unusual tones of violet-purple and its fruit-scented flowers but for its well-mannered, graceful habit, trained on a wall or fence. Classed as a rambler, this rose is well behaved and not too vigorous, like some rambling roses. A superb flush of flowers appear in early summer and into July, which prove to be quite a talking point when in full swing. I find this rose incredibly versatile in the garden, working well with various colour schemes and associating nicely with most plants. AGM*.

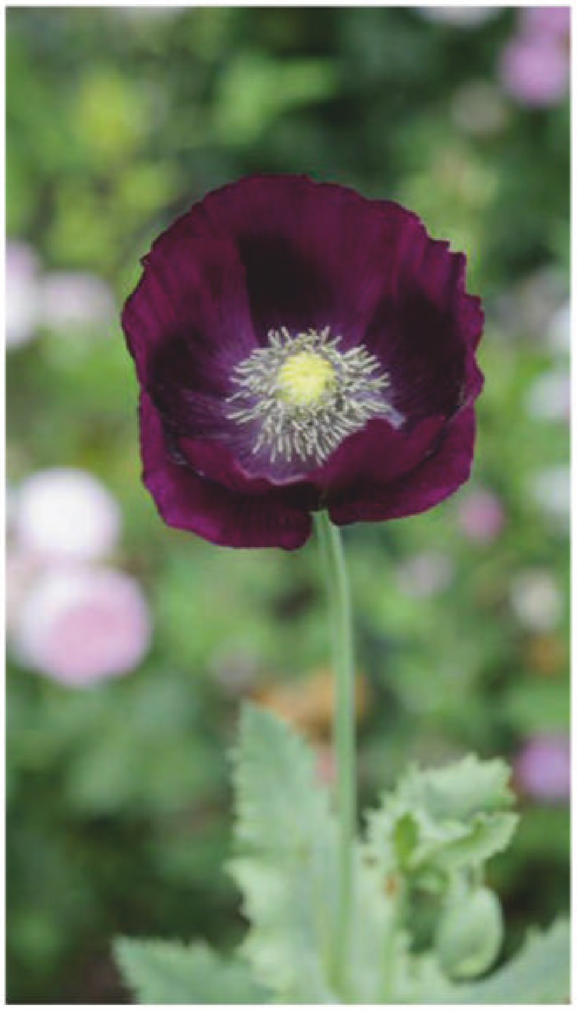
Height 2.5m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Moist, free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest May – June.

BEGONIA LUXURIANS

This architectural, palm-leaved species, with sprays of delicate white flowers, will not tolerate a frost but will quite happily survive during the winter months with a little protection, say in a frost-free conservatory or greenhouse. When the risk of frost has passed, plant out in a container. Feed and water to achieve an impressive specimen relatively quickly, then enjoy the glorious umbrella-like leaves throughout the summer. Also try to associate it with tropical planting schemes, such as cannas, dahlias, zinnias or *Fuchsia boliviana*. AGM.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Brazil.
Conditions Well drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H1B, USDA 10a-11b.
Season of interest May until first frosts.





PAPAVER SOMNIFERUM 'LAUREN'S GRAPE'

If you're going to grow a somniferum poppy, make it this one. Once you've tried 'Lauren's Grape' and appreciated its sophistication and sultry, bowl-like, dark-purple flowers, you'll be forever particular about your poppy selections. I start seed off early in the year and treat as an annual, although the seedlings will overwinter in free-draining spots. If visitors to the garden don't relieve me of the blue/green seedheads, they make superb cut flowers to add form to an arrangement; and do save the seed for the following year, once the pods have dried.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Garden (species from southeast Europe and western Asia).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest Early summer, seedheads persist into winter.

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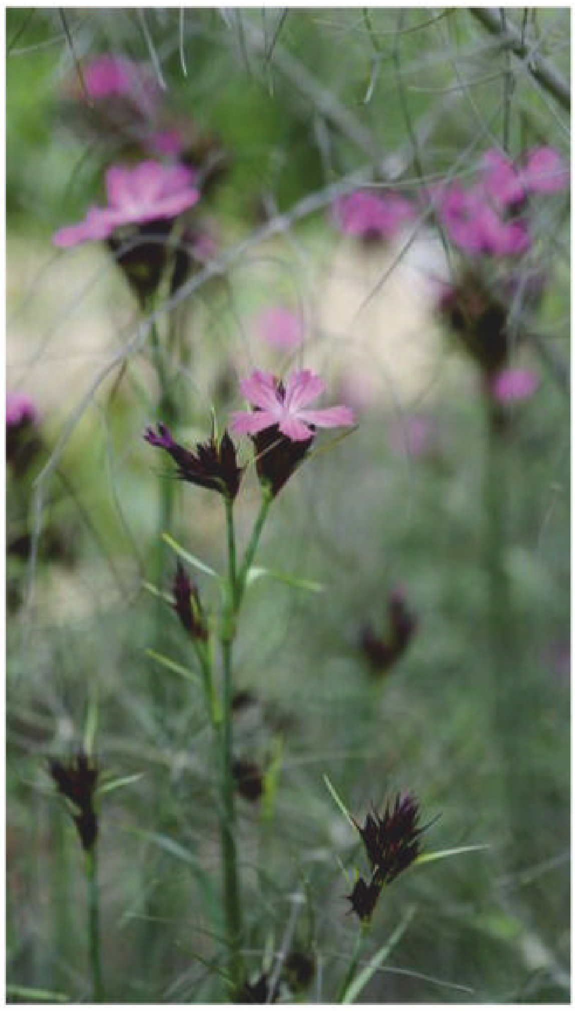
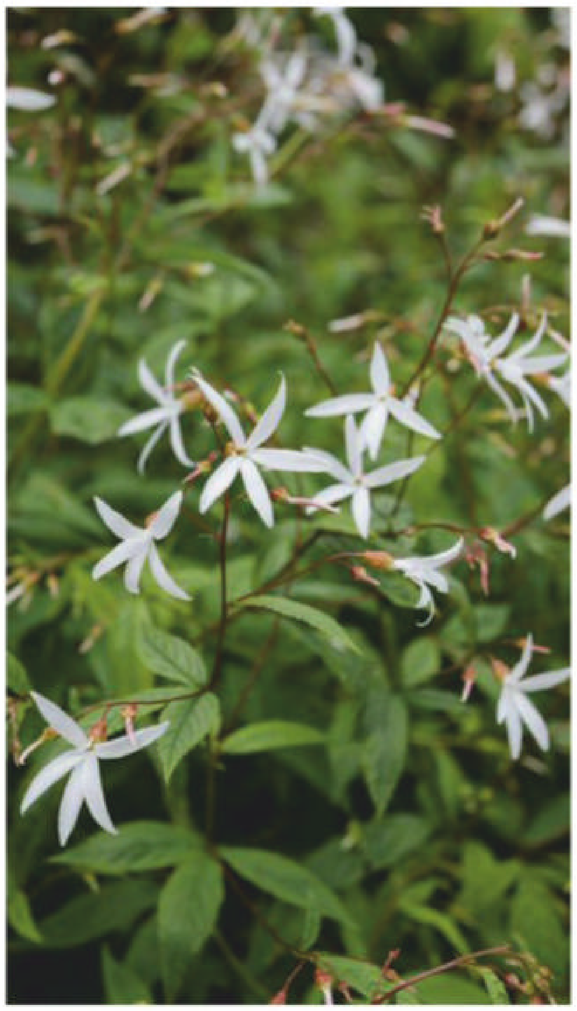
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†]Hardiness ratings given where available.



CAMPANULA 'KENT BELLE'

This *Campanula* impresses me on many levels; there's the sheer size of its blooms and the dark intensity of its midnight blue, bell-like flowers, and that's just for starters. As with most campanulas, 'Kent Belle' enjoys a fertile and moisture-retentive soil in the summer and for best results it also needs reasonable light levels. The weight of the clusters of flowers can become heavy for the plant, so support with a little birch or hazel to showcase the blooms to maximum effect. Reliably perennial and deserved of its Award of Garden Merit. AGM.

Height 1m.
Origin Hybrid of *C. takesimana* and *C. latifolia*.
Conditions Moist in summer but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest June – July.



DIANTHUS CARTHUSIANORUM

Far from the rather dated reputation of the 'Doris' pink, this little species of *Dianthus* has bucked the trend and found itself very much in favour, even gracing the catwalk that is the RHS Chelsea Flower Show Garden. These lovely plants, with their small, magenta flowers that are displayed on wiry stems, provide a rare delicacy and effortless, naturalistic quality that other dianthus simply don't offer. Plant it in a sun-baked position that has reasonable drainage for the best performance.

Height 50cm.
Origin Southern and central Europe.
Conditions Well-drained soil, tolerant of chalk; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.
Season of interest Summer.

GILLENIA TRIFOLIATA

When you choose this species of *Gillenia* from northeast USA, and admire its delicate, white, star-like flowers on red stems, you might assume that it's going to be temperamental and difficult to grow. Thankfully the contrary is true. I grow this plant against a north-facing wall, where it enjoys a moist, shaded position, and the clump gently increases and commands the attention of the space in which it thrives. *Gillenia* harmonises well with roses and perennials that enjoy a little shade such as *Lamprocapnos*, *Astrantia* and *Polygonatum*. AGM.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Northeast USA and Canada.
Conditions Moist but reasonably drained soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest May and June.

PLACES TO VISIT

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

Renowned nurserywoman, **Claire Austin**, set up her nursery in 1999, following in the footsteps of her famous father, rosarian David. She holds the National Collection of Bearded Iris and a Hybrid Herbaceous Peony Collection, devoting two of the nursery's five acres to the latter. Claire opens up her nursery in June when you can view the collection and buy some unusual peonies. Claire Austin Hardy Plants, White Hopton Farm, Wern Lane, Sarn, Newtown, Powys SY16 4EN. Tel 01686 670342, claireaustin-hardyplants.co.uk

James Alexander-Sinclair and Arne Maynard are two of the numerous designers who have contributed to some of **Cottesbrooke Hall's** stunning and opulent garden features. The garden sits beautifully and is enveloped by the rolling Northamptonshire countryside. Look out for the large, double borders on The Terrace, designed by Alexander-Sinclair, and the prolifically flowering rose pillars along Statue Walk – stunning in June. The gardens also boasts a Wild Garden, a Philosopher's Garden and a Pool Garden. Cottesbrooke Hall, Northampton NN6 8PF. Tel 01604 505808, cottesbrooke.co.uk

June is a spectacular time to visit **Mottisfont's Walled Garden**, which is noted for its world-famous collection of old-fashioned roses. I love this garden for its plant associations, combining roses with perennials and shrubs, all ▷

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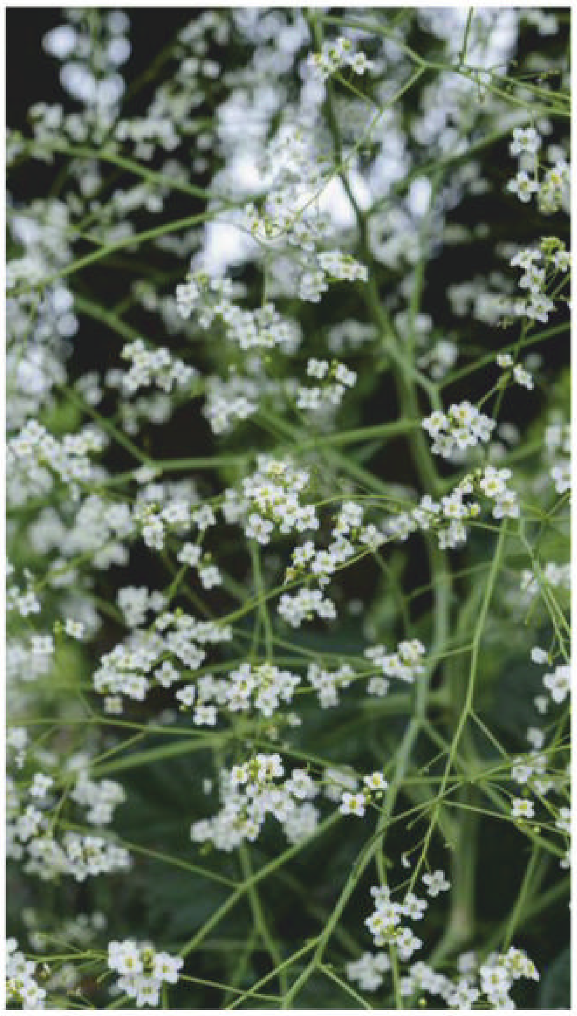
CRAMBE CORDIFOLIA

I challenge you to walk past a *Crambe cordifolia* in all its glory and not be blown away by its colossal cloud of small white flowers in early summer. In a mixed border, there are few plants that rival its spectacle. As with delphiniums, I'd advise planting *Crambe* towards the back of the border, to enable plants that climax later in the season to disguise its deterioration as the summer heat intensifies. The sprays of seeds provide interest following the flowers, but the kidney-shaped foliage is little to write home about. As with most brassicas, *Crambe* enjoys a fertile garden soil. AGM.

Height 2m.
Origin Caucasus.
Conditions Deep, fertile and moist soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.
Season of interest Early summer.



ALLIUM ATROPURPUREUM

This is not one of those alliums that increases each year and clumps up beautifully. However, I can completely forgive it this one fault and happily treat it as an annual as the intense, dark-purple flowers work so well with perennials at this time of year. You'll find the bulbs inexpensive and I would suggest planting them in groups of five to seven and work them through clumps of early summer perennials such as artemisia and nepeta as well as with later-flowering perennials such as phlox to give interest and punch in early summer.

Height 1m.
Origin Hungary to Turkey.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Early summer.

GERANIUM PRATENSE 'WISLEY BLUE'

This beautiful form of cranesbill has got some real stature when it flowers, particularly when grown up a domed support of hazel or birch, providing height in the border. Classic, powder-blue flowers are profusely produced in early summer, giving a big burst of colour to mixed plantings. Once the flowers have faded, the plant can be cut to the ground, to enable a fresh flush of foliage to emerge, giving a neat and compact foil for other emerging plants. This, like most geraniums, is very versatile and is quite content in many garden situations and schemes.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Garden (species Europe and Asia).
Conditions Reasonable, well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Early to midsummer.

▷ tied together with a sophisticated use of colour. Successful planting with roses can be a challenge, and Mottisfont is a great place for ideas and inspiration, and for finding a new rose to fall in love with. Its latest feature, to reflect the garden's productive past, is the exciting new Kitchen Garden, one more reason to visit this most romantic of English gardens. Mottisfont, nr Romsey, Hampshire SO51 0LP. Tel 01794 340757, nationaltrust.org.uk

Fibrex Nurseries is a family run business, established more than 57 years ago. Many of us will recognise its iconic displays at flower shows during the summer months, featuring pelargoniums, ivies and ferns. These displays bring together a cross section of the genera and give us an opportunity to see these generous plants up close and speak to the experts who grow them first hand. Fibrex, home of the National Collection of pelargoniums, holds a Gardener's Gathering on 22 June, which includes exhibits of ferns and begonias, plus talks, demonstrations and workshops throughout the day. Fibrex Nurseries, Honeybourne Road, Pebworth, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 8XP. Tel 01789 720788, fibrex.co.uk

June is the perfect month to visit the iconic White Garden at **Sissinghurst Castle**, which Vita Sackville-West, fondly referred to as her 'grey, green and white garden', emphasising the palette of colours brought together for a stunning effect. Early flowering perennials, such as delphiniums, lilies, foxgloves, irises and peonies, complement the roses, including 'Madame Alfred Carrière' and 'Princesse de Nassau', which will be at their peak in June, Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Biddenden Road, near Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2AB. Tel 01580 710700, nationaltrust.org.uk

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The Outsider

Horticulturist Hannah Gardner fulfils a long-held ambition and heads to Israel for a spectacular show of irises among the country's remarkable 2,800 recorded plant species

WORDS HANNAH GARDNER ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

Israel is a small but geographically diverse country; its total territory is less than a tenth of the size of the UK. Sitting at the junction of Europe, Asia and North Africa, it has serene deserts in the south, high mountains on the Syrian border and a Mediterranean coastline. Northern Israel is the most densely populated region. *Maquis* and *garigue* dominate the limestone hills and the fertile valleys are intensively cultivated for olives, vines, almonds, wheat and barley. Many of the wild plants are annuals, or bulbous or tuberous geophytes (that is, they have an underground storage organ), so the date they start growing each year is dependent on winter rainfall. Wildflowers are central to the identity and cultural history of Israelis, but many are now endangered and there is an ongoing environmental struggle to protect the country's emblematic flora and promote nature conservation and sustainability.

There are many small nature reserves where the protected flowers thrive and are slowly repopulating after a history of loss and damage from overgrazing, rapid development and overpicking.

Inspiration for the trip

The Davies Alpine House at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is in a league of its own for horticultural excellence. When I was a student the glasshouses were managed by Tony Hall, a plantsman with a passion for Juno and Oncocyclus *Iris* groups. This enthusiasm rubbed off on to me and I have always wanted to see some of these beauties in their natural Middle Eastern habitat.

When to go

Flowering is from late February to early April, depending on the altitude and the rains. Israel is a compact country with good roads so you can cover ground easily.

Where to go

Jerusalem feels incredibly vibrant and slightly volatile. The crevices of the ancient walls of the Old City are covered in the most resilient wildflowers. The climbers and fruit trees of shambolic private gardens peep over high walls. The Jerusalem Botanical Gardens at Givat Ram are well worth a visit before you head north for the hills. Staff are keen to promote and display Israel's flora, and the entire garden feels relaxed and inviting.

The Lower Galilee region in northern Israel is the main blooming site for the impressive smoky purple Gilboa iris (*Iris haynei*).The Gilboa Mountains form a ridge with vistas overlooking the Yizra'el Valley and West Bank. I headed to the Mount Barkan Nature Reserve at 500m. A crowd of handsome *Ferula communis* greeted me as I crowned the hill, although protection from grazing perhaps gives this plant too much of an advantage over the fascinating matrix of smaller species in this wonderful meadow. The low shrubby, resinous *Pistacia lentiscus* and familiar globe flowers of *Echinops adenocaulos* and creamy, candelabra inflorescence of *Salvia dominica* are dotted among the rocks. The *Iris* are here too, their large flowers offering solitary male bees a snug overnight shelter. They emerge covered in pollen as the sun warms the flowers.

The cool, lavender-grey flowers of *Cynoglossum creticum* echo the hue of the *Iris*, but the meadow is unbelievably floriferous, with pops of bright, candy-pink *Linum pubescens*, yellow *Ranunculus asiaticus* and scarlet *Tulipa agenensis* interspersed with the gentle pastels of exquisite *Ricotia lunaria* (Egyptian honesty), *Scorzonera pappposa* and creeping, silvery *Paronychia argentea*. I even caught the intoxicating scent of the ripening fruit of *Mandragora autumnalis* as I wandered.

The Givat Hamoreh Reserve is a short drive away. Here an impressive, fractured, limestone pavement tumbles down the mountain. Between the rocks is a heavenly tapestry of flowers as far as the eye can see, among them the rare Nazareth iris (*Iris bismarckiana*). A flower of indescribable beauty, it is white, burgundy, brown, mottled, translucent and exotic, growing amid a white foam of *Scandix pecten-veneris* (shepherd's needle), soft-lemon *Scabiosa prolifera* (Carmel daisy), crimson *Anemone coronaria* and a plant I had not previously rated but now adore – the annual *Salvia viridis*, easy to sow and grow, with its vivid, purple-and-white flowers glowing in the gentle sun.

Plant to grow at home

There is an *Iris* species suited to nearly every environment. The Oncocyclus are endangered, and as exacting in cultivation as they are beautiful, but the elegant, bearded iris (*Iris* x *germanica*), immortalised by Vincent van Gogh, and a stalwart of early summer gardens, is easy to grow. This lilac-and-purple-flowered clone is a hybrid that has been in cultivation since ancient times. Hybridists have created myriad wonderful colour combinations that provide heady scent and sensuality. Inspired by the rich, deep tones and patterning of the irises I saw on my travels, I would count among my favourites *I.* 'Benton Caramel', *I.* 'Indian Chief' and *I.* Senlac. Best planted together in small groups, they demand sun, good drainage and limey soil. Avoid overcrowding, and lift and divide them straight after flowering to enable them to make fresh roots promptly and build up for the following year.

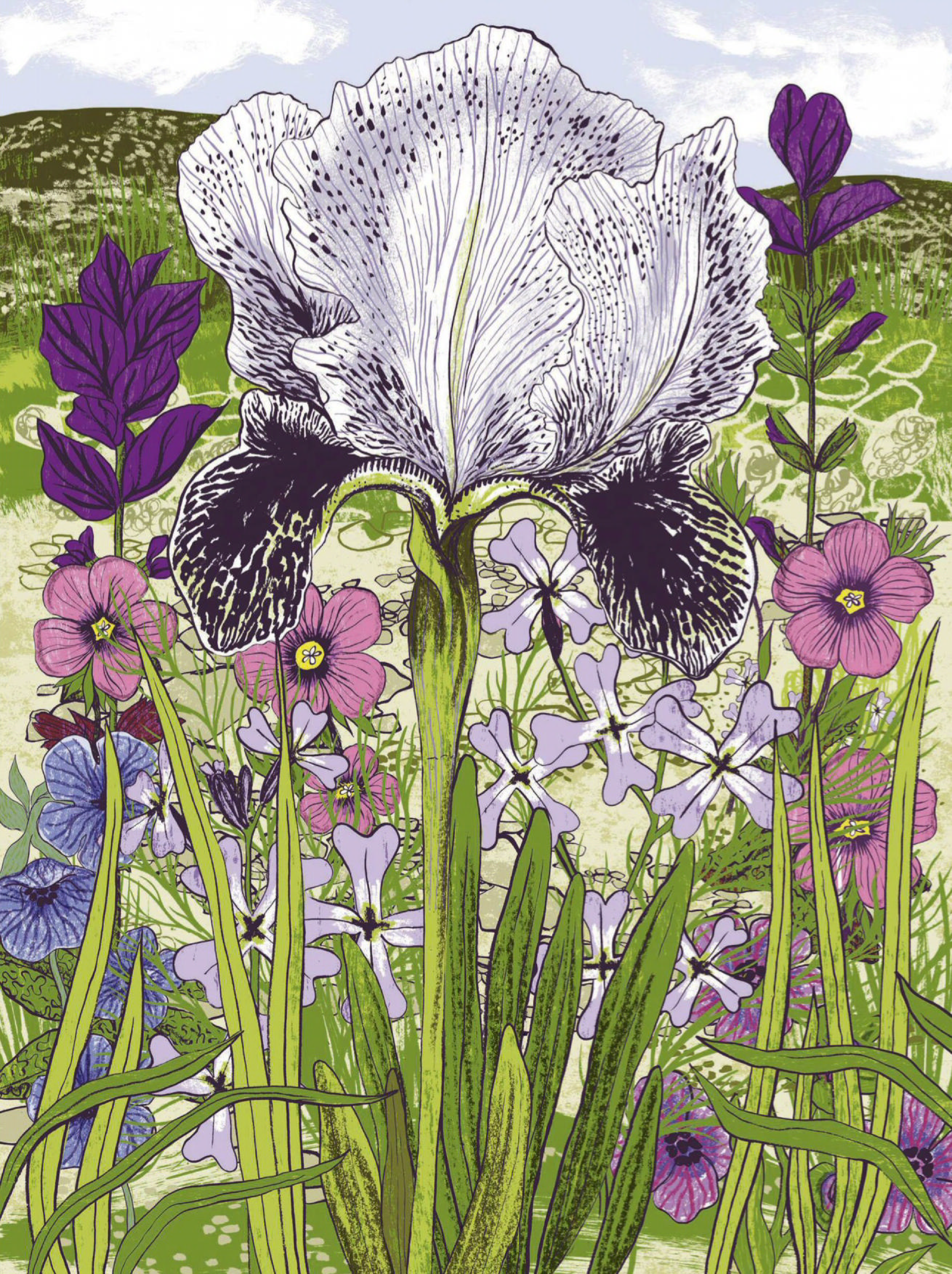
Guides and maps

Flowers of the Eastern Mediterranean by Ori Fragman (ARG Gantner, 2001).
flora.org.il is a comprehensive, online listing of the flora of Israel.

Where to stay

Jerusalem Hotel
4 Antar bin Shaded Street, Jerusalem 91191, Israel.
Tel +972 (0)2 628 3282, jrshotel.com
Conveniently located near the Damascus Gate into the Old City, this hotel has a bohemian and atmospheric Palestinian restaurant, and the welcoming staff are themselves interested in wildflowers. Parking available.

Villa Brown
54 Ha'neviim Street, Jerusalem 94702, Israel.
Tel +972 (0)2 501 1555, brownhotels.com/villa
Relaxed boutique hotel with a small but beautiful garden.



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GARDENING TALENT

Anna Greenland

Taste, sustainability and growing your own are all vital to Anna, who's passion has brought her to the role of grower and consultant to top chefs, including Raymond Blanc

PORTRAIT JASON INGRAM

Earliest garden memory Gorging myself on raspberries picked from our garden. The plants felt so much taller than me. It was my own secret world. I also remember the flavour being extraordinary.
Most valuable training Apprenticeship in ecological horticulture at the Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (University of California, Santa Cruz): a complete six-month immersion in organic food production. Living in cabins on the farm overlooking Monterey Bay, working the land, soaking up all the lectures. I didn't want to come home. Actually I didn't, I stayed for a further year getting a job at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in LA.
Who has inspired your career the most? Sean O'Neill – an organic grower based in Cornwall sending produce to some of the UK's top restaurants. He's also a musician and manages to bring an element of artistry to his gardening that makes the crops sing. I worked with Sean when I first started growing food. He specialised in elegant mixes of leaves, herbs and flowers for salads and was the first to grow microherbs in this country.
What did you do before you became a grower? I studied broadcast journalism at university – I thought I wanted to be a TV news reporter. Then I fell in love with a surfer from Cornwall and left London to start a new life. We rented a cottage with a greenhouse and small patch of land. As soon as I'd grown and tasted my first vegetables I knew I'd found what I wanted to do. I was waitressing at Jamie Oliver's restaurant, Fifteen Cornwall, and they agreed to support me and start buying my produce. That was the beginning.
Three most worthwhile tips Safeguard your soil by making compost; experiment and push boundaries; care for your tools.
Unsung hero of the plant world Nettles. Often strimmed back, sprayed or dug out, they are actually nutritional powerhouses with medicinal value, supportive of more than 40 species of insect and providers of a nitrogen-rich liquid feed for other plants. They should be revered as one of our great British native plants.
Favourite gardening books Charles Dowding and his books have been a great resource to me over the years. He's the don of no dig. Anything by Joy Larkcom. I also love some of my trusty herb books like *Hedgerow Medicine* by June Bruton-Seal and Matthew Seal. Oh, and I love Jinny Blom's style of design in *The Thoughtful Gardener*.
Contact annagreenland.co.uk

Meeting of minds

In the Wiltshire garden of a garden designer and a botanist, deftness of design and expert plant knowledge have combined to create an abundant meadow tempered by strong structure

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

IN BRIEF

Name Spilsbury Farm.
What Meadow garden underpinned by strong structure.
Where Wiltshire.
Size Six acres.
Soil Primarily heavy, water-retaining clay.
Climate Mild southern English climate, prone to spring frosts.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

At the height of summer, the garden thrums with bees, insects and birds, all revelling in the swaying nose-high masses of euphorbia, hogweed and other robust meadow plants.

I WANTED A GARDEN THAT WOULD BE A DELICIOUS SENSORY EXTRAVAGANZA

"I would rather go for a walk than work in the garden," says Tania Compton. Given that she has been intimately involved with the making of gardens since she first developed a passion for plants in Ibiza more than 30 years ago, it sounds an unlikely assertion. Visit her at home in Wiltshire, however, and it starts to make sense when you discover that she has created a garden that impels you to go for a walk.

Mown grass paths run away from the house across an undulating expanse of eye-high planting. Bronze fennel, the candyfloss pink meadowsweet *Filipendula rubra* 'Venusta', eggy yellow *Centaurea macrocephala* and *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple' prop each other up, swaying in the breeze and thrumming with wildlife. *Euphorbia palustris* is a key player, popping up everywhere and more than earning its keep. There are copses of alder, liquidambar, spindle and guelder rose, hedges of rambling roses, and a nut walk underplanted with ferns, snowdrops and hellebores.

Anchoring the super-abundance is an avenue of *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine', a ring of bright red-stemmed willow, and sculptural cubes of hornbeam lining a mown path which leads to an expansive pond. The garden has excellent bone structure swathed in a veil of bohemian dishevelment. It is a look that could only be successful in the hands of an expert.

"We are both avowed plantaholics, and that underpins everything that we do," says Tania. Formerly gardens editor of *House & Garden* magazine, she is now a garden designer and botanical artist married to the eminent botanist Dr James Compton who, in addition to his scientific research and plant hunting expeditions, has fact-checked every single issue of *Gardens Illustrated* magazine. There can be few couples in the country better able to understand the subtle nuances required to select only those plants that suit the place in which they are to grow.

Of course two enthusiastic gardeners in one garden can also be a recipe for conflict, but Jamie's passion for plants operates at such a cerebral level that he doesn't feel the need to interfere with Tania's plans for disporting them.

"It's true," says Jamie. "When we dug up the tennis court because no one ever played on it, it was hoped that I would fill it with esoteric treasures. But that's not really my style. When I am studying a plant I will visit it three time a day and scrutinise it in every detail, but once my research is over I am happy to move on to the next thing. I leave the big picture to Tania."

When they moved into Spilsbury Farm 20 years ago, that 'picture' was a virtually blank canvas. There was little garden to speak of, and a rough tarmac drive divided the house from barbed wire fences enclosing fields of sheep. "Our last garden, in nearby Hanging Langford, was a mini Sissinghurst in a quarter of an acre. It was intense," says Tania. "I had a Black Garden, a White Garden, pebble mosaics, the lot, and I loved it with a passion. But when we came here, I just wanted to sweep away the fences and drink in the views."

Tania immediately gravitated towards her own interpretation of an ecological style. "It was a practical decision, as much as anything. We've got six acres and limited time, so the plants pretty much had to look after themselves."

Back then the couple also had two small children and a house in need of extensive renovation. It could have been overwhelming, but Tania embraced the sense of opportunity. "The day we moved in was also Sophie's first day at school and Fred's first morning at nursery. I waved them both off then came back here, surrounded by packing cases, and felt the most tremendous sense of liberation. We didn't do much other than grow vegetables for the first few years, but from that first day the garden started forming in my mind."

After three years in limbo, the garden finally took shape in a flurry of mud and digger contractors. "We took up all the tarmac, excavated a large new pond, created a new gravel drive that approached the house from behind, and planted up one long border. Everything else has just evolved from there.

"I never once got my scale rule out – plans can limit your sense of possibility – although I did have all the vistas and axes in mind from the outset. You need to respond to the place, to the way your planting schemes evolve, to the views that in time become concealed or framed."

And this, perhaps, is the root of the garden's success. Tania retains a never-ending delight in playing, experimenting and seeing what happens. "It is not something I could do in a client's garden, but here I am free. Everything goes in small, and therefore inexpensive, so there is little downside. I put in 100 amelanchiers that cost 60p each, to see what happened. They all took off so fast that I pollarded them hard, expecting to lose a lot, but every single one bounced back healthier than ever. In the end I had to do some conscious culling myself, but it was an instructive process."

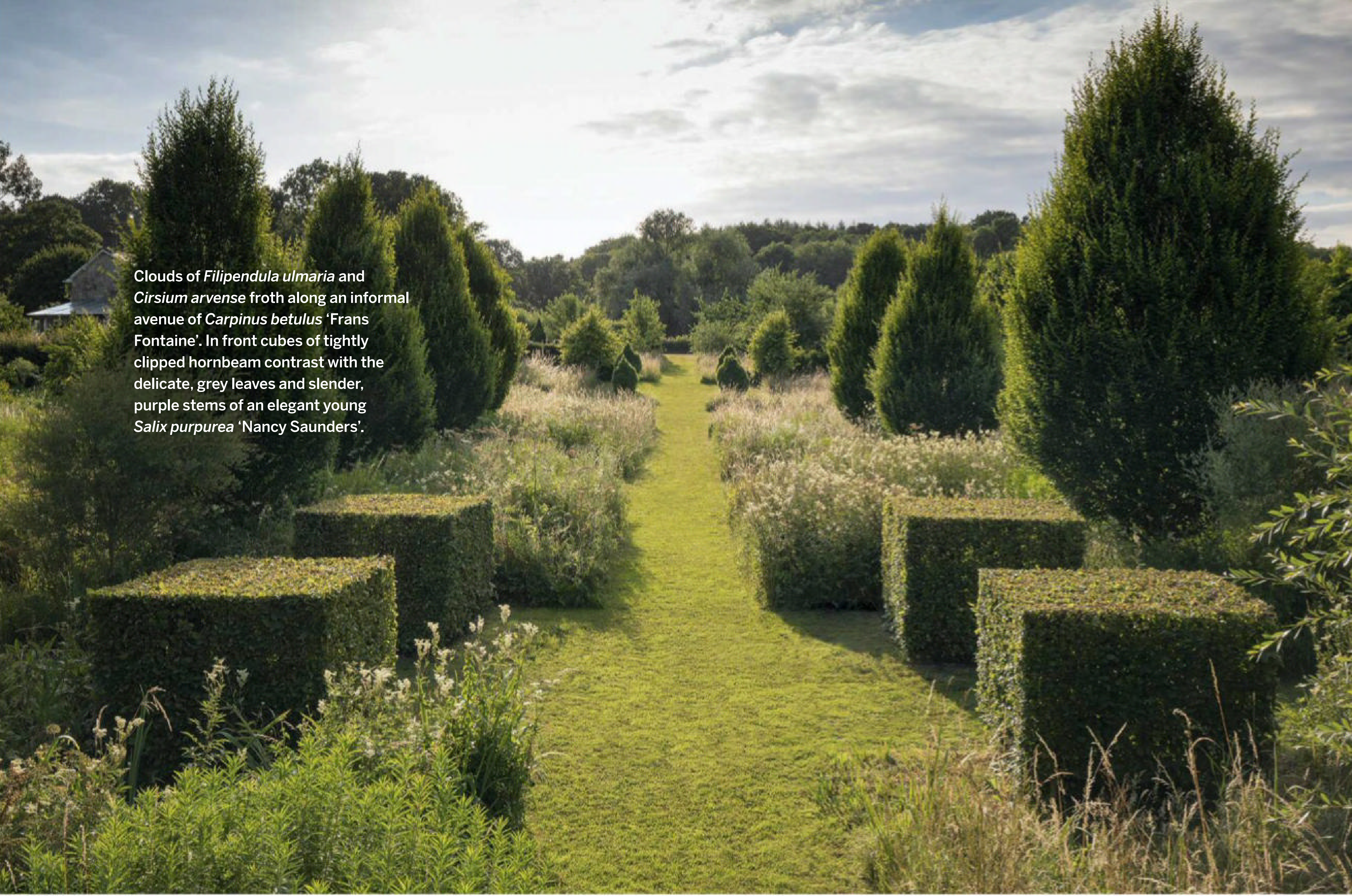
What Tania never really expected was the massive influx of wildlife that has been lured in by her plant choices. "We have nuthatches and treecreepers, slow-worms and glow-worms. Everything buzzes with bees and insects. They have brought a mesmerising extra dimension to the garden."

She still devotes every Friday to the garden. "I work alongside two marvellous gardeners who come once a week," she says, but she really is happiest strolling down one mown path or another before stretching out on the pontoon by the pond, or swinging gently on one of the many strategically positioned hammocks. "I could, and do, lie there for hours. I wanted a garden that would be a delicious sensory extravaganza, and that really is what we have." □

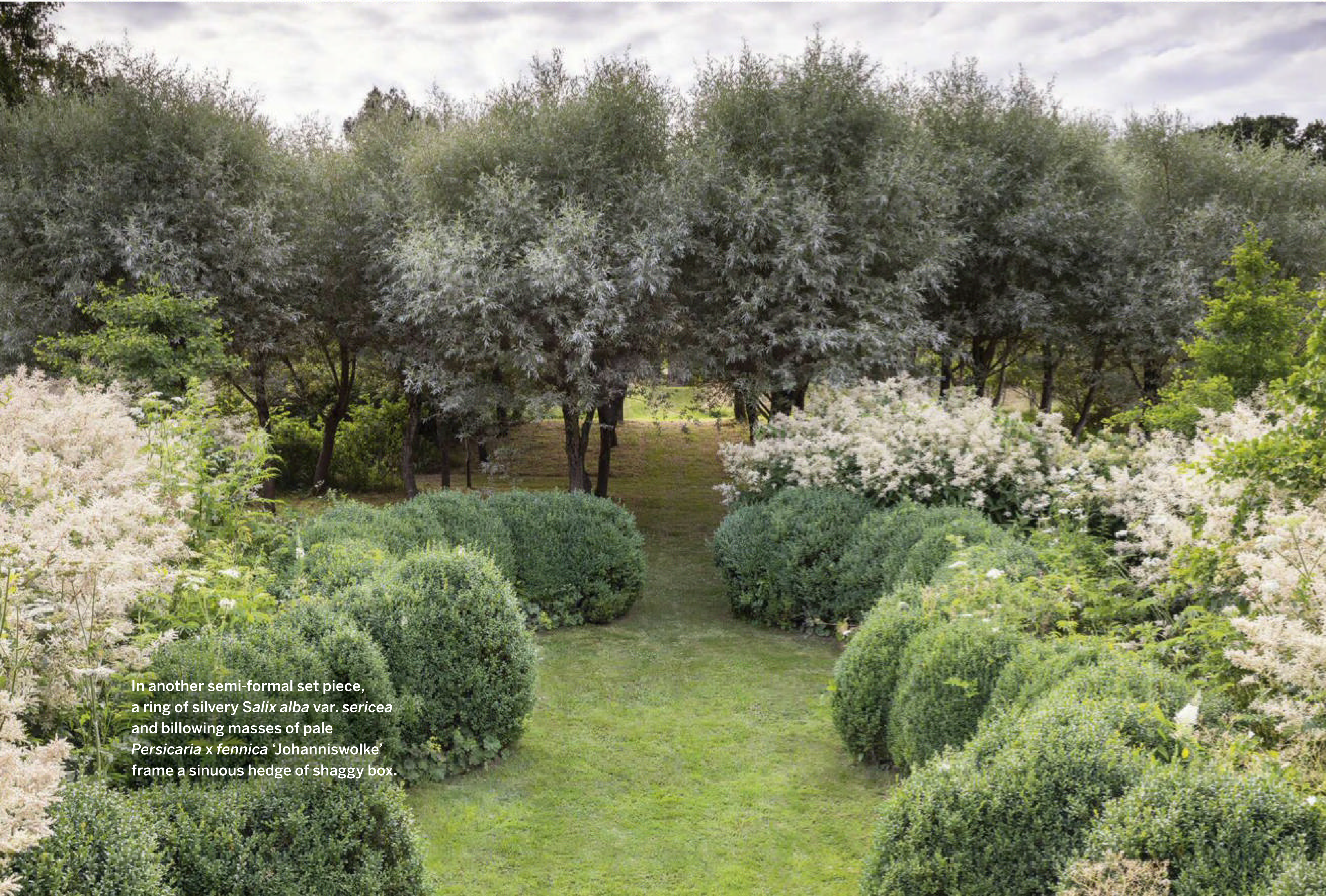
USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Tania's work at **taniacompton.co.uk**

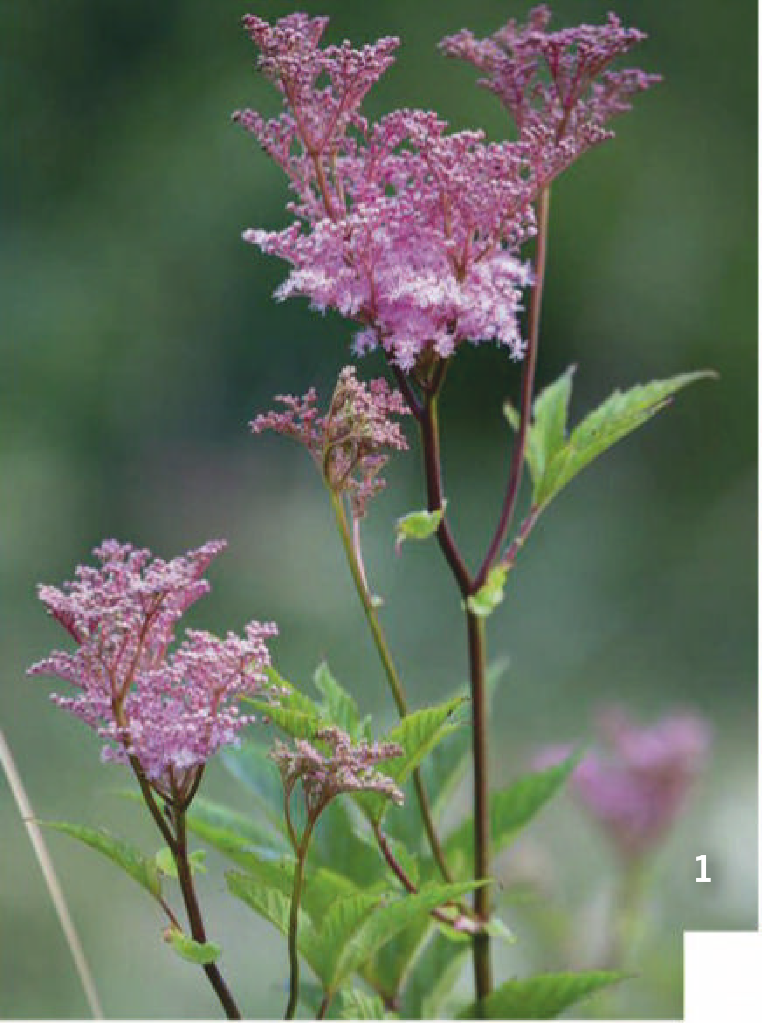
Turn the page for 16 key plants from Spilsbury Farm, and tips on combining meadow planting with formal structure



Clouds of *Filipendula ulmaria* and *Cirsium arvense* froth along an informal avenue of *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine'. In front cubes of tightly clipped hornbeam contrast with the delicate, grey leaves and slender, purple stems of an elegant young *Salix purpurea* 'Nancy Saunders'.



In another semi-formal set piece, a ring of silvery *Salix alba* var. *sericea* and billowing masses of pale *Persicaria* x *fennica* 'Johanniswolke' frame a sinuous hedge of shaggy box.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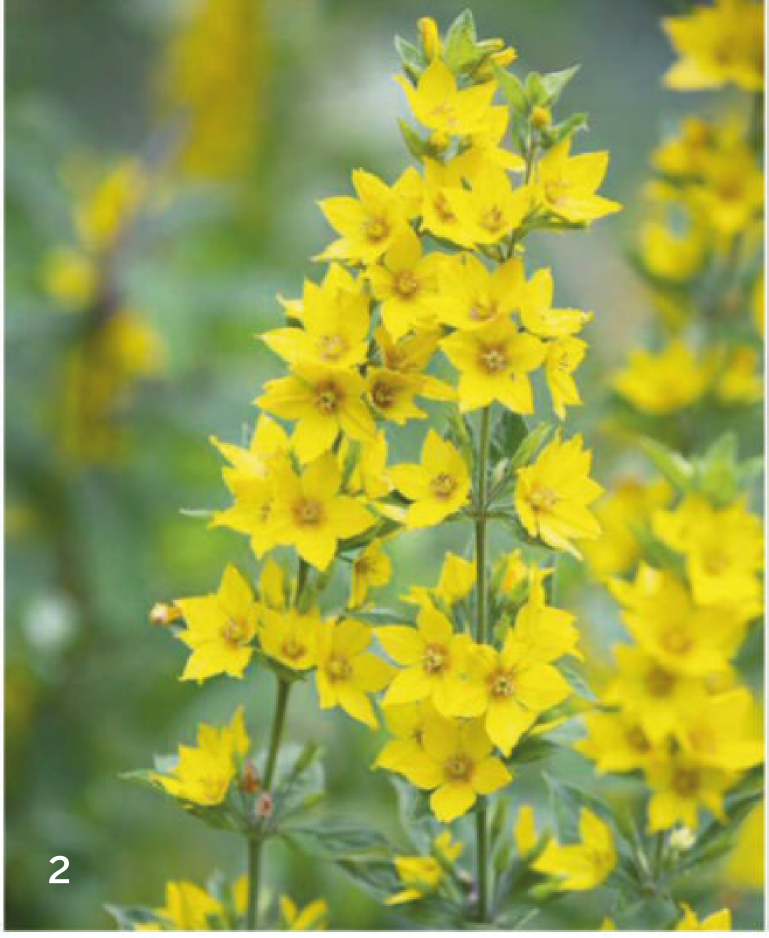
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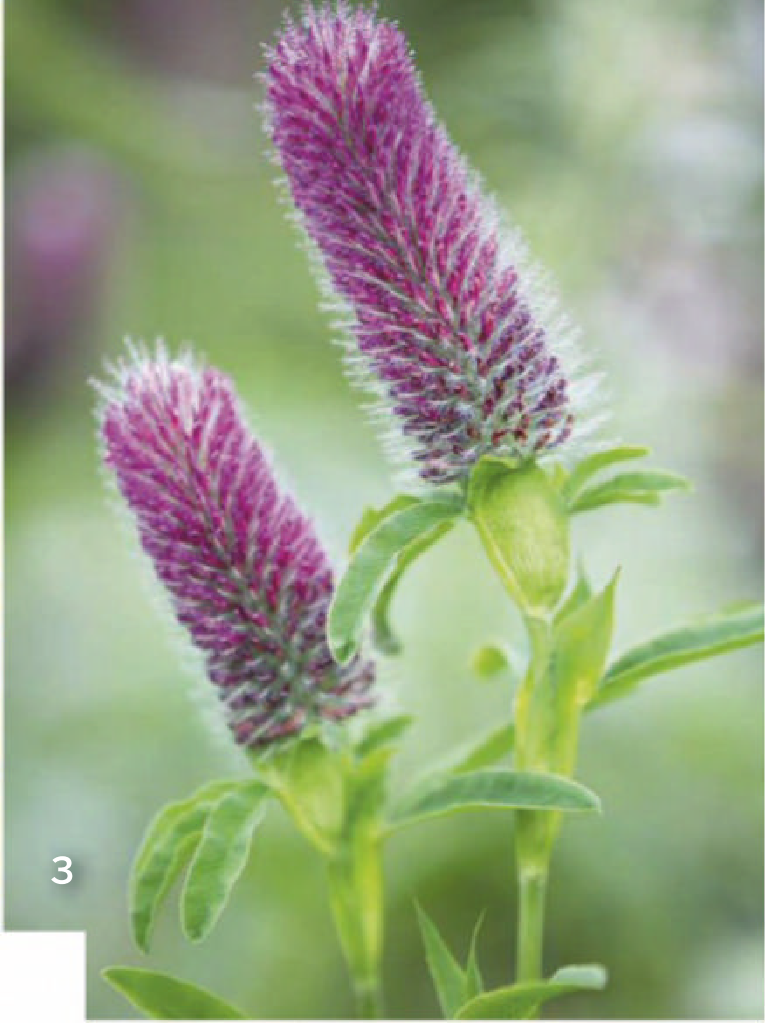
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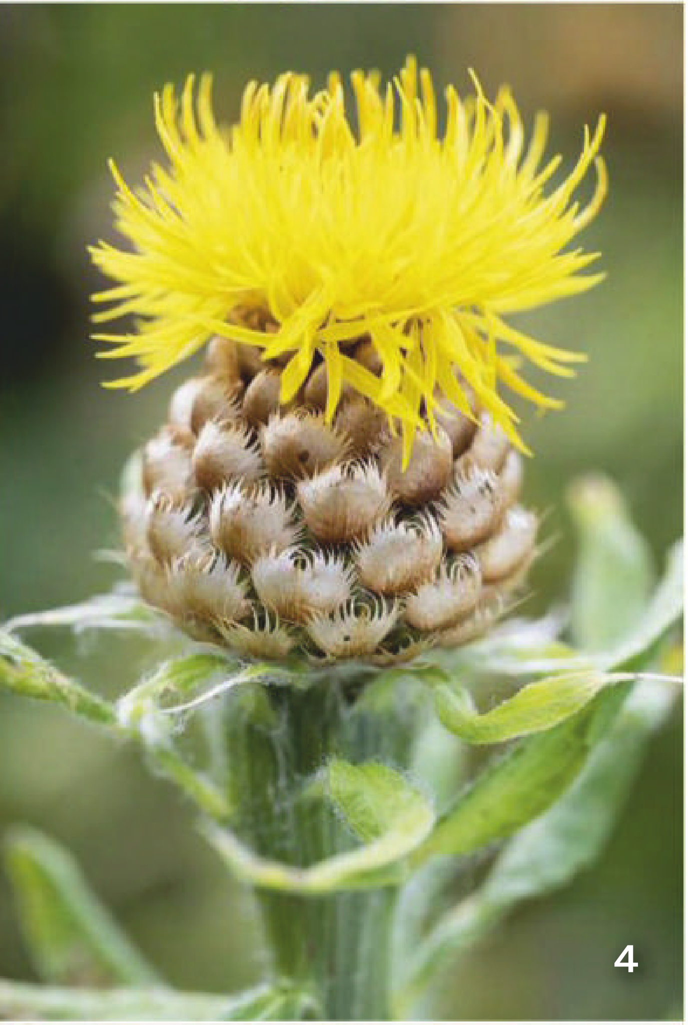
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16 KEY PLANTS

1 *Filipendula rubra* 'Venusta'
Statuesque meadowsweet with rich rose-pink flowers, slender stems and leaves reminiscent of a grape vine. 2.5m. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b†.

2 *Lysimachia verticillaris*
Wildly invasive in the garden's damp clay. Bold spikes of rich yellow flowers in late summer are tempered by its meadow neighbours. 1m. RHS H6.

3 *Trifolium rubens*
A robust and bushy plant covered in dense clusters of rosy pink flowers that are magnets for both bees and butterflies. 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-10b.

4 *Centaurea macrocephala*
Giant knapweed has shining, conker-brown buds that burst open in a tangle of fine golden petals in late summer, clearly signalling their membership of the thistle family. 1.5m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

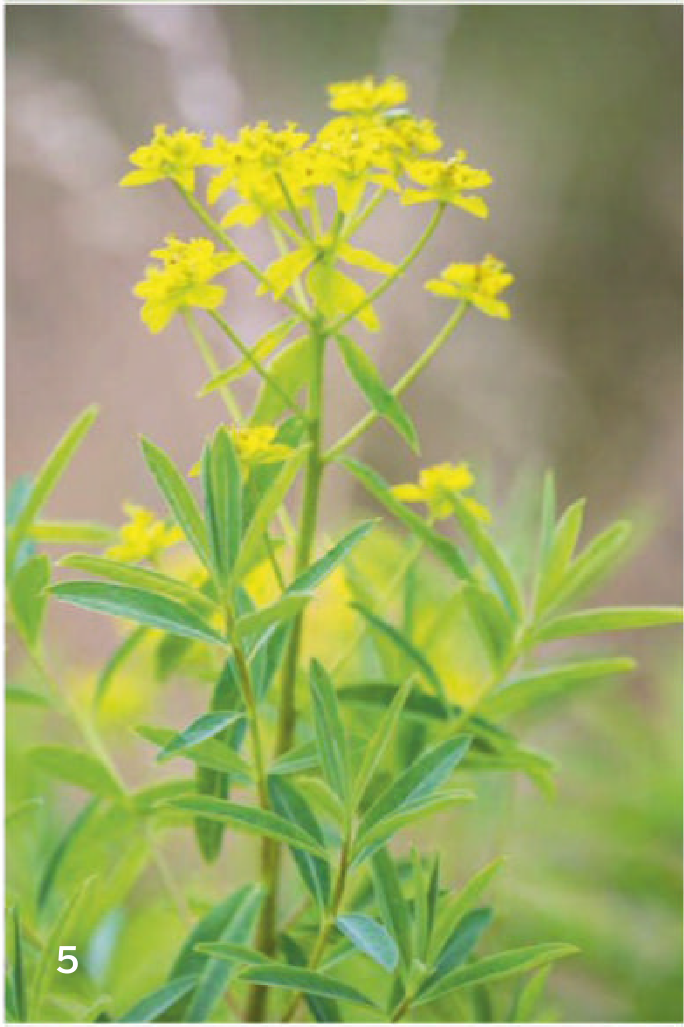
5 *Euphorbia palustris*
Creates spectacular mounds of golden flowers and bracts that subtly fade to rich shades of yellow and orange. 90cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.

6 *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple'
With its dramatic spikes of purple-red flowers this is a gardenesque but robust perennial that makes a dramatic contribution to a mixed meadow. 1.5m. RHS H6.

7 *Inula magnifica* 'Sonnenstrahl'
Shooting loose clusters of yellow daisy flowers high in the late summer sky. Sturdy and trouble free. 2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.

8 *Centaurea nigra*
The common knapweed black produces masses of thistle-like flowers that are equally attractive to humans and nectar-foraging insects. 1m. RHS H6.

• Turn to page 47 for more key plants.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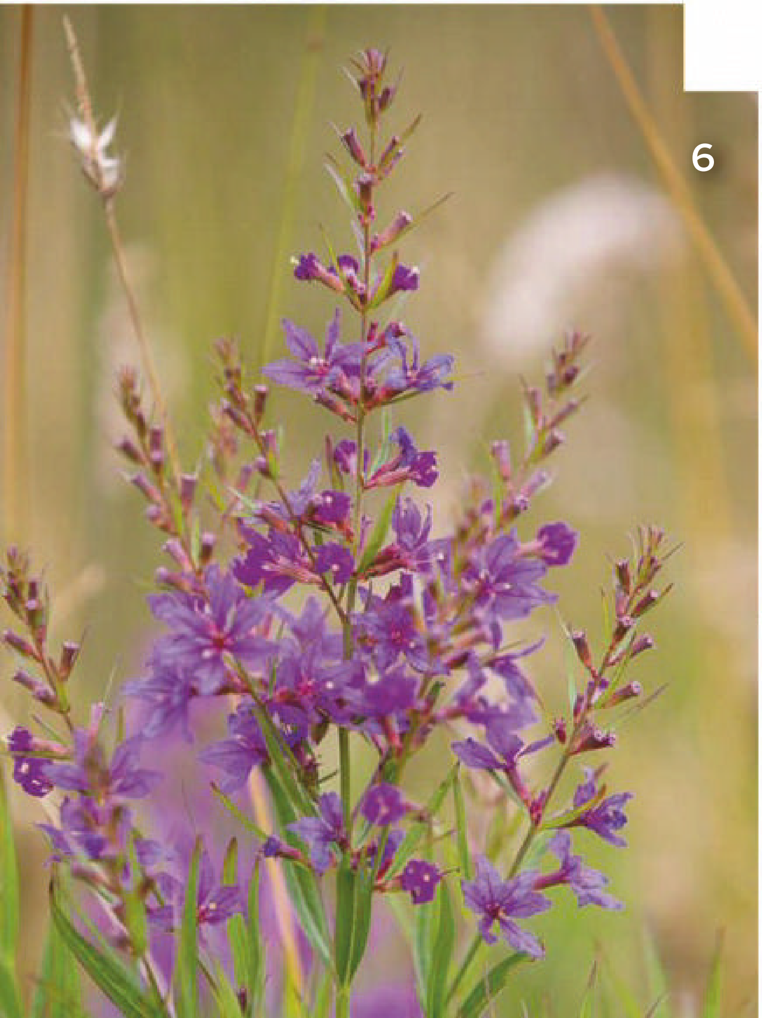
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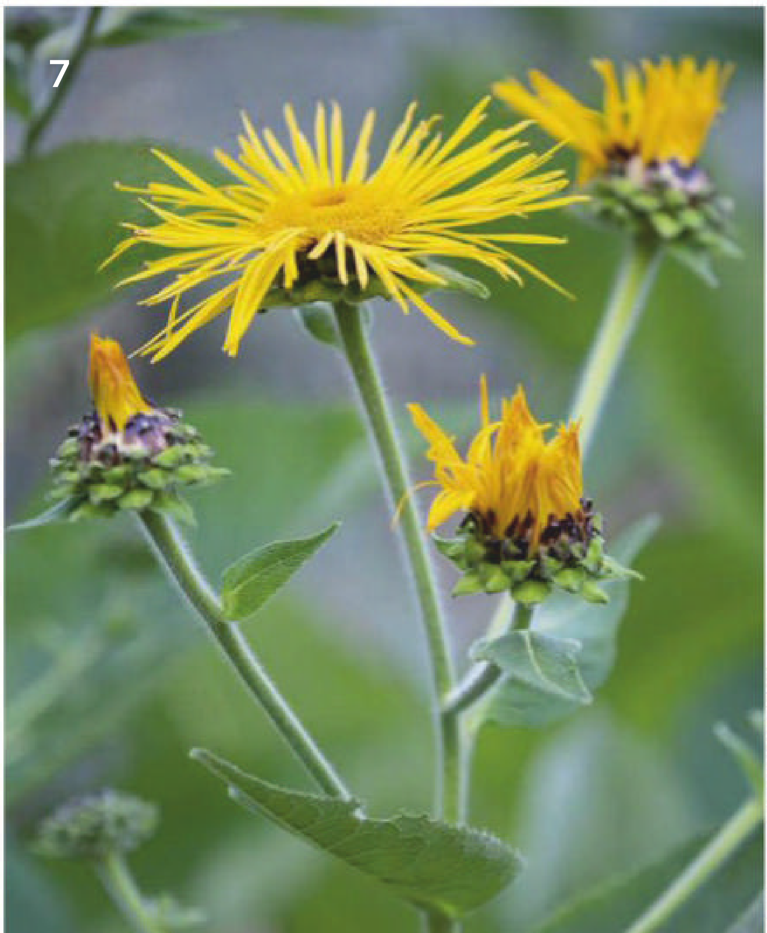
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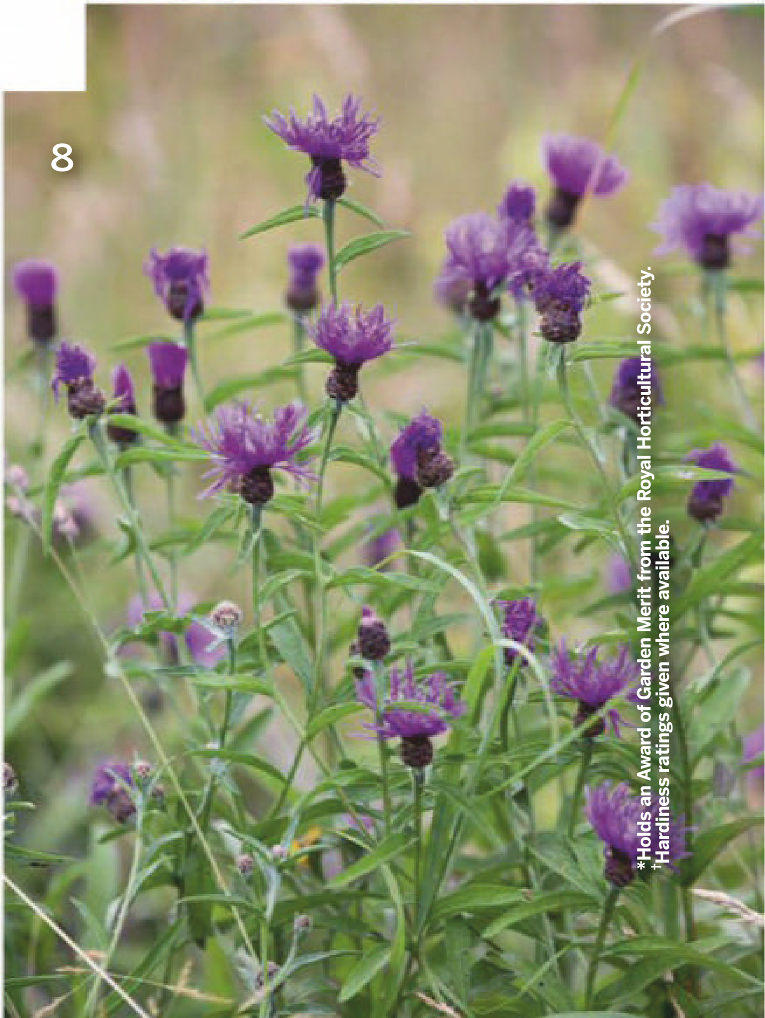
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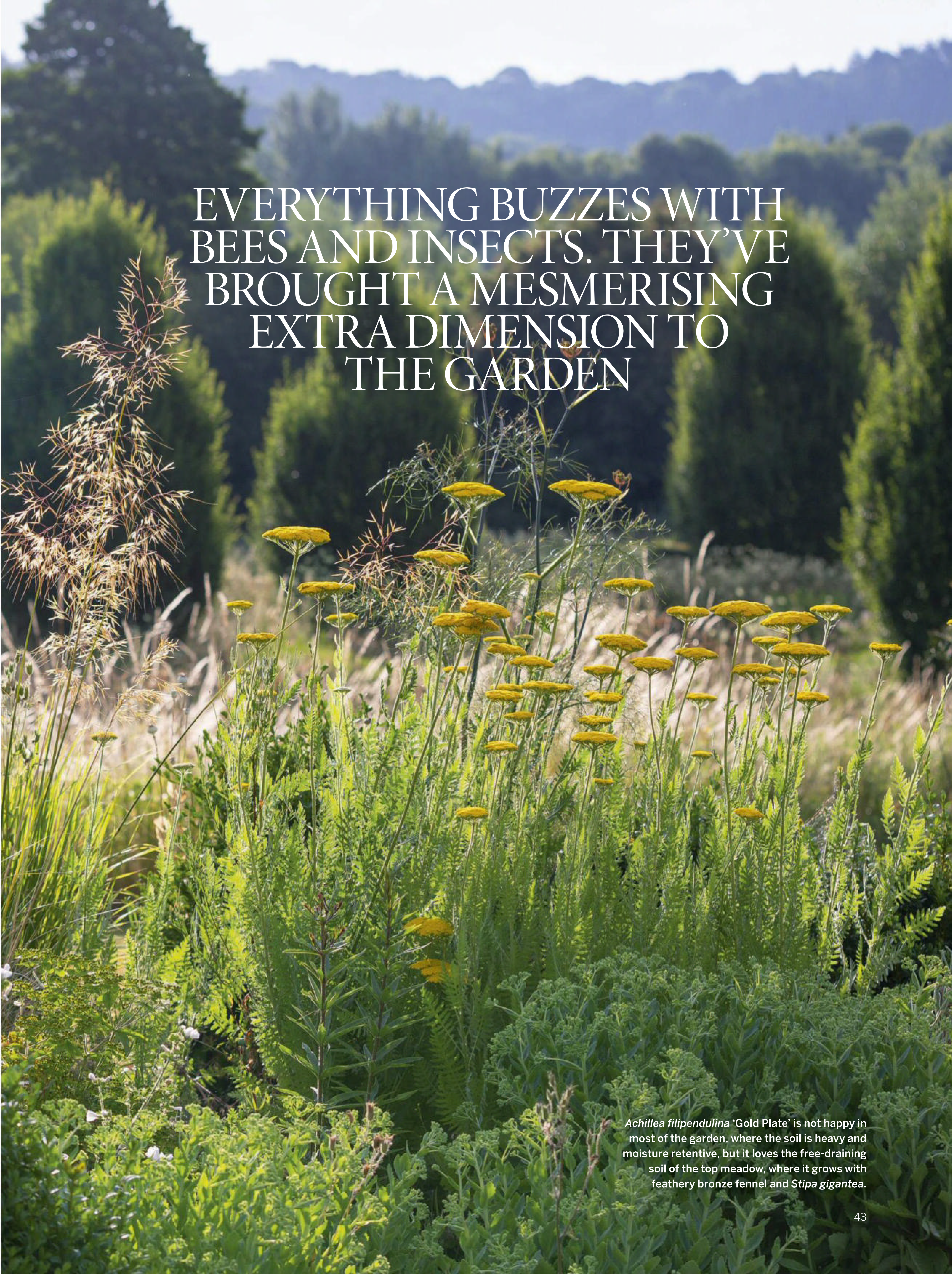
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



EVERYTHING BUZZES WITH BEES AND INSECTS. THEY'VE BROUGHT A MESMERISING EXTRA DIMENSION TO THE GARDEN

Achillea filipendulina 'Gold Plate' is not happy in most of the garden, where the soil is heavy and moisture retentive, but it loves the free-draining soil of the top meadow, where it grows with feathery bronze fennel and *Stipa gigantea*.

> YOU NEED TO RESPOND TO THE PLACE, TO THE VIEWS THAT IN TIME BECOME CONCEALED OR FRAMED

The small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* 'Winter Orange', as its name suggests, has brilliantly colourful winter stems that glow in low sunlight. Year round it makes an attractive contribution to the garden, its fresh green foliage and distinctive form standing out against the swaying mass of meadow perennials.

Taming the wild

How to combine wilderness and formality

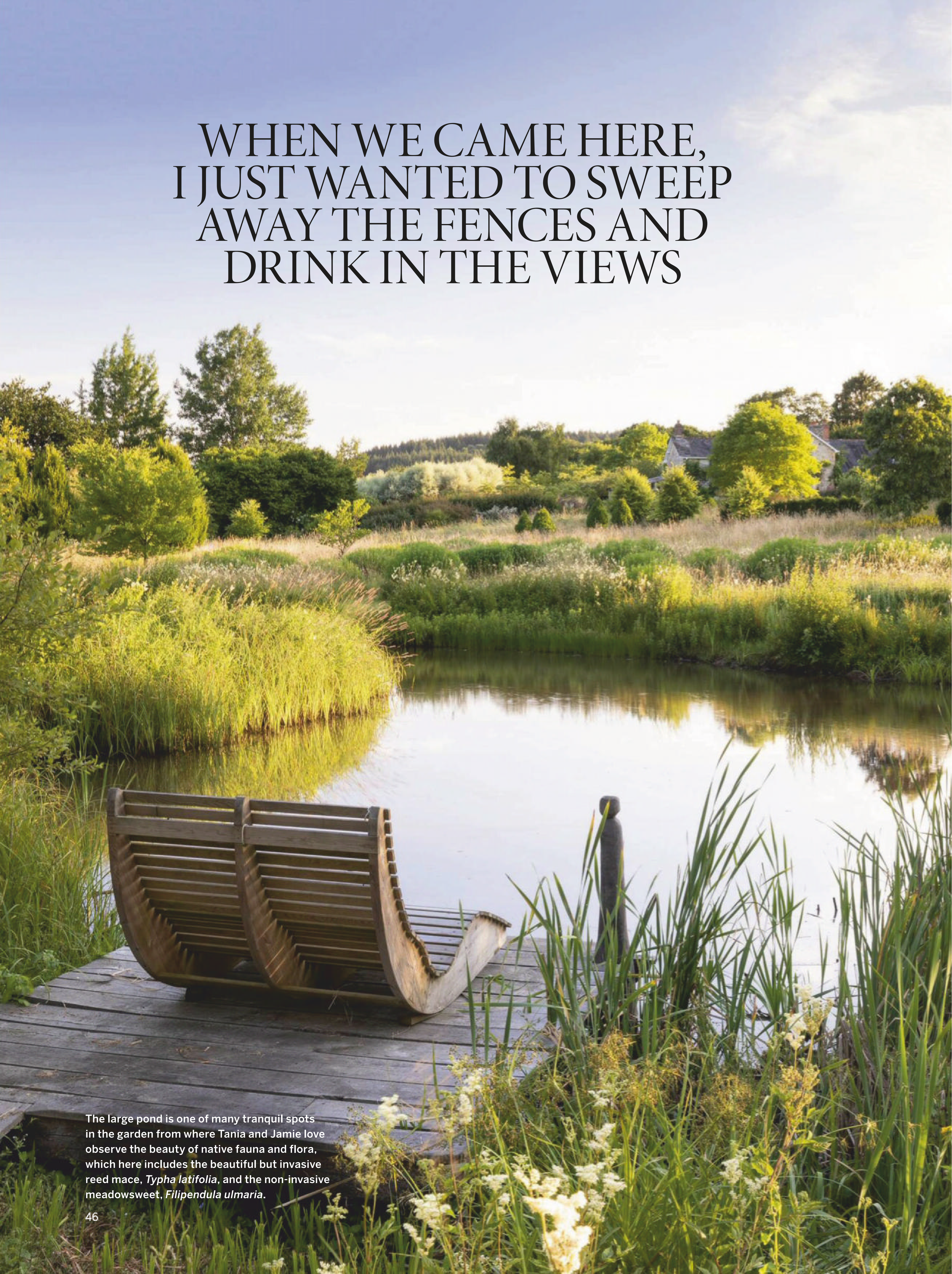
Plant lots of box and then leave it to its own devices. This does well on the moist soil, and in its natural form it provides anchoring structure without looking inappropriately manicured.

Choose plants that have a good natural form, without too rigid a structure. Tania has had great success here with *Carpinus betulus* 'Globus' and *C. betulus* 'Frans Fontaine', both of which have a lovely form.

Plant roses through your meadows. The wild *Rosa moyesii*, *R. rubiginosa*, *R.* 'Cantabrigiensis' and the magnificently red-thorned *R. sericea* subsp. *omeiensis* f. *pteracantha* (all of which are deer proof) grow at Spilsbury Farm, but you could use anything vigorous enough to hold its own and grow above the height of the meadow grasses.

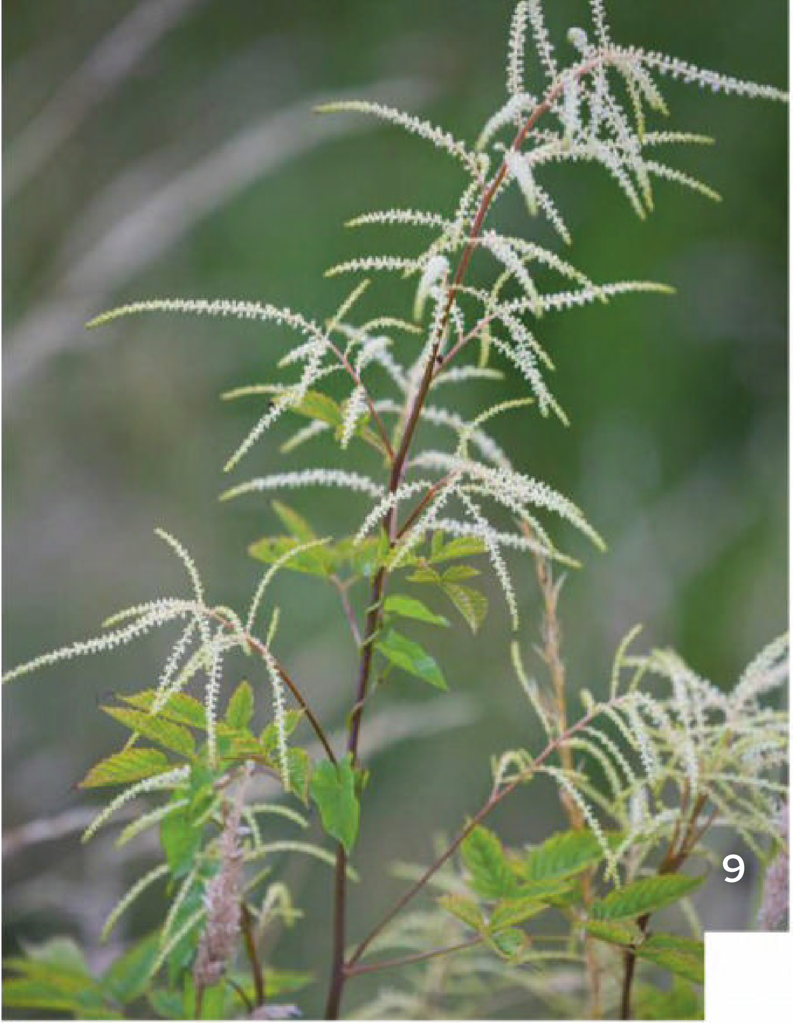
Put in lots of willow, provided your soil is moist enough to keep it happy. This can be hacked back to the base with a chain saw once a year and will rapidly make a significant contribution to the winter structure of your garden.

Plant lots of bulbs. These will introduce a 'gardened' element early on in the year. Choose different combinations according to their proximity to the house. You could start with quite complicated species tulips, relaxing into a mass of snowdrops and *Narcissus lobularis* in the farthest reaches of the garden.



WHEN WE CAME HERE, I JUST WANTED TO SWEEP AWAY THE FENCES AND DRINK IN THE VIEWS

The large pond is one of many tranquil spots in the garden from where Tania and Jamie love observe the beauty of native fauna and flora, which here includes the beautiful but invasive reed mace, *Typha latifolia*, and the non-invasive meadowsweet, *Filipendula ulmaria*.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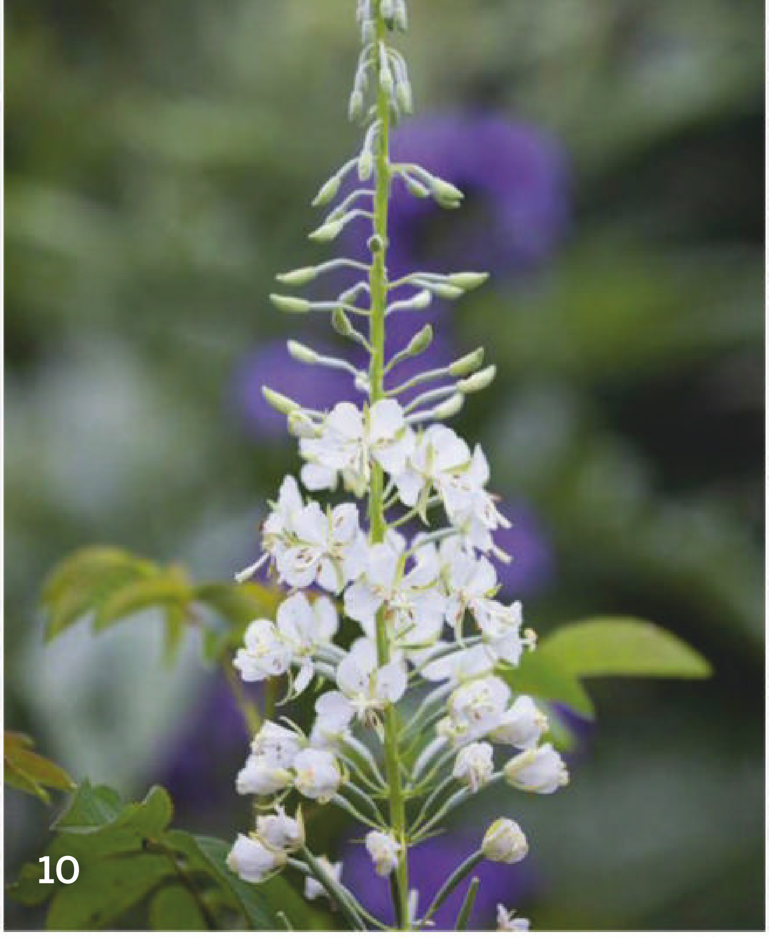
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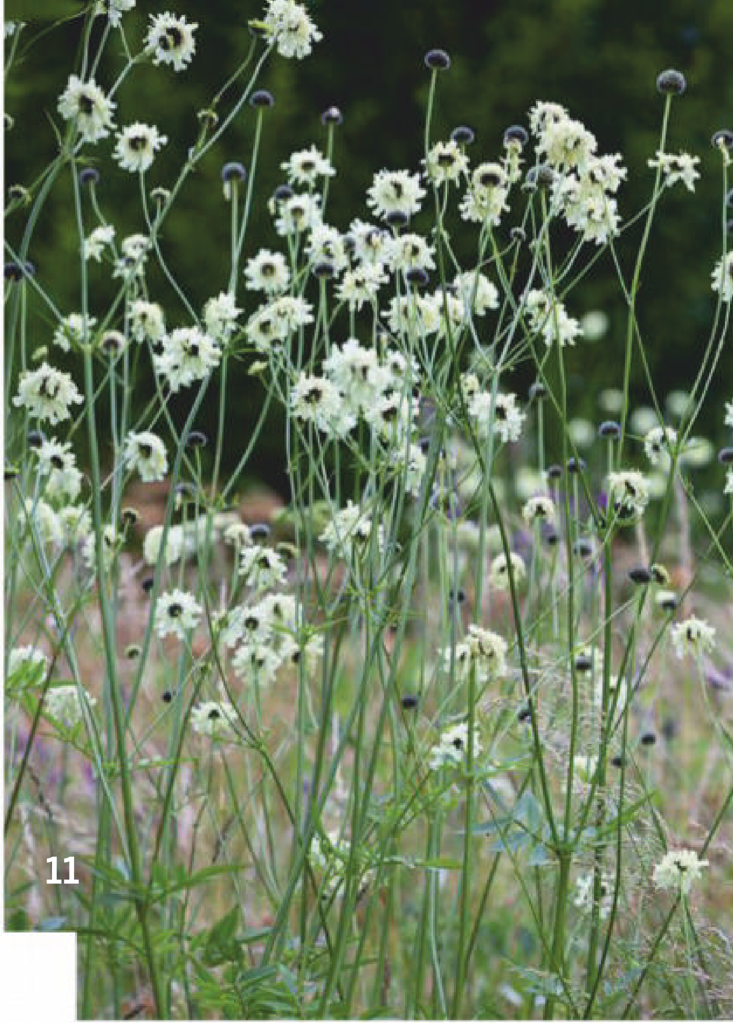
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16 KEY PLANTS CONTINUED

9 *Aruncus dioicus*
Elegant and airy, the goat's beard produces masses of flower spikes covered in pearl-like buds that burst open in a creamy froth of early summer blossom. 2.5m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

10 *Chamaenerion angustifolium* 'Album'
Although invasive in the garden borders, here in the meadow it is more clump forming and tempered by grazing deer. 1.5m. RHS H7.

11 *Cephalaria gigantea*
Pale primrose-yellow scabious-like flowers are held aloft on strong but wiry stems to produce a kinetic display throughout the summer. 2.5m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

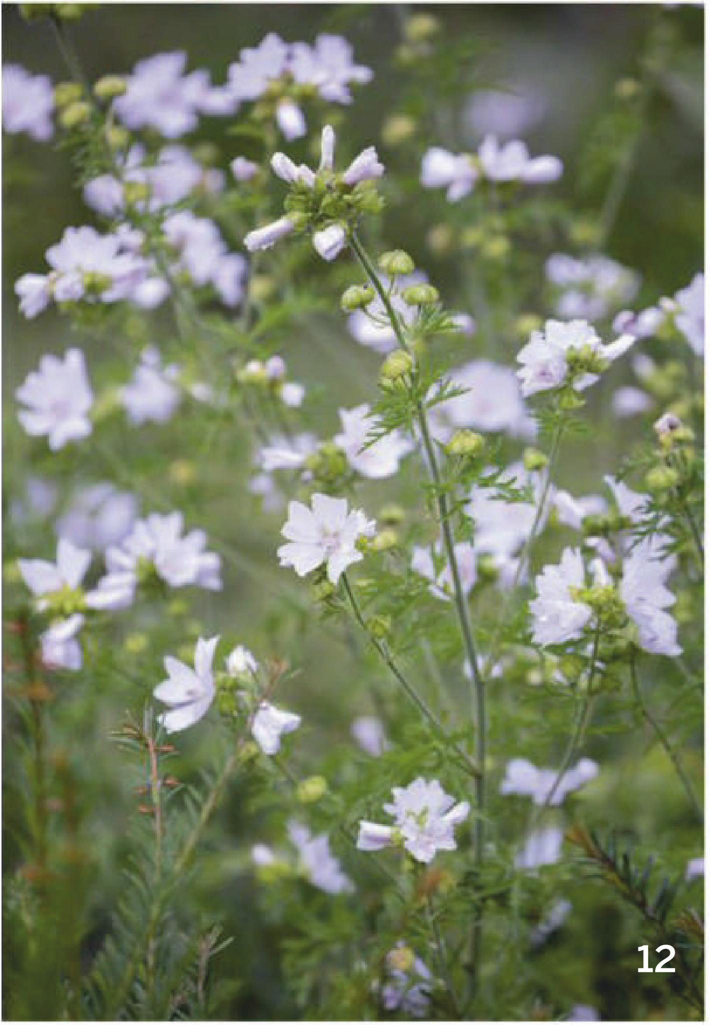
12 *Malva moschata* f. *alba*
Member of the mallow family, this extremely pretty plant is covered in delicately fragrant silky white flowers for weeks on end in summer. 1m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

13 *Galega officinalis*
Goat's rue produces masses of lilac pea-like flowers from midsummer to early autumn, and is robust enough to thrive on even quite poor soils. 1.5m. RHS H7.

14 *Delphinium* 'Pagan Purples'
Grown in a herbaceous border, delphiniums need careful staking, but in the bustle of the meadow they can become self supporting. 1.5m. RHS H5.

15 *Heracleum sphondylium*
Not to be confused with the poisonous giant hogweed, this common hogweed is a pretty umbellifer that is a nectar-rich food source for many beneficial insects. 2m.

16 *Campanula lactiflora* 'Prichard's Variety'
A robust clump-forming perennial with panicles of violet bell-like flowers. 1m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.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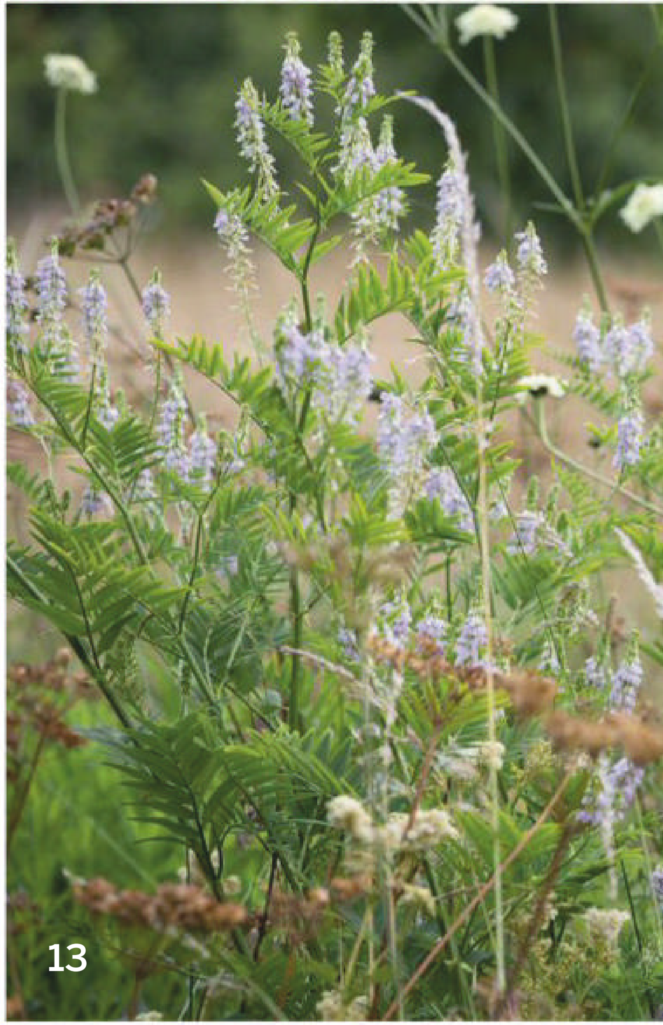
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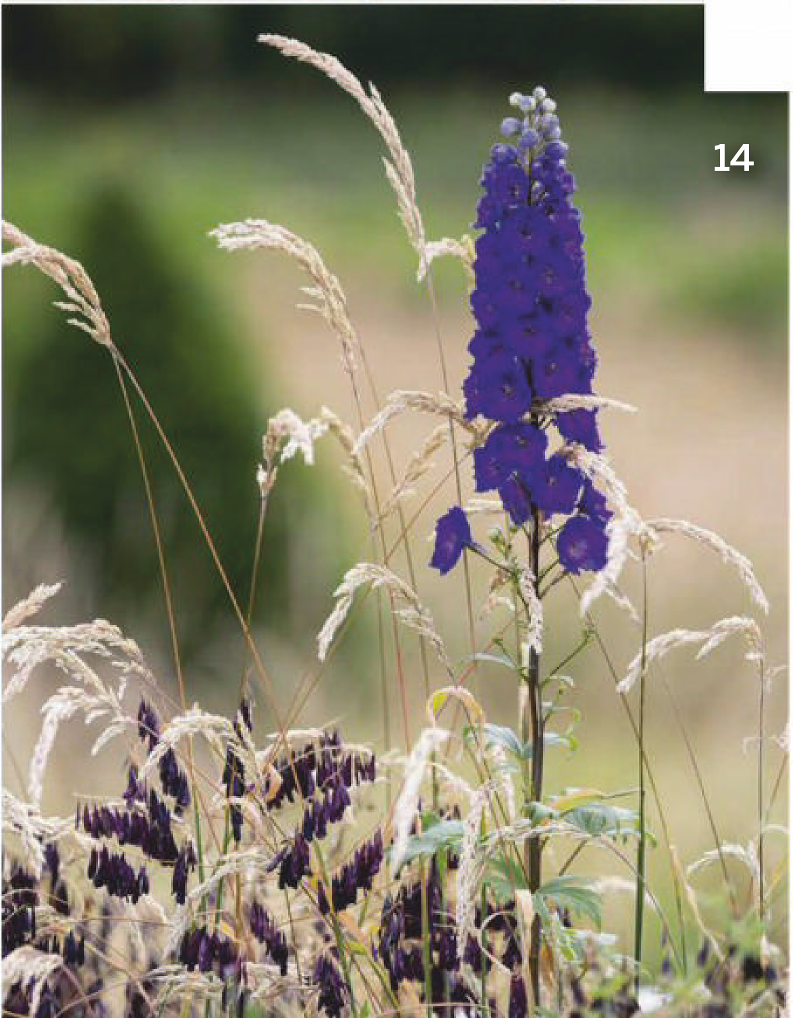
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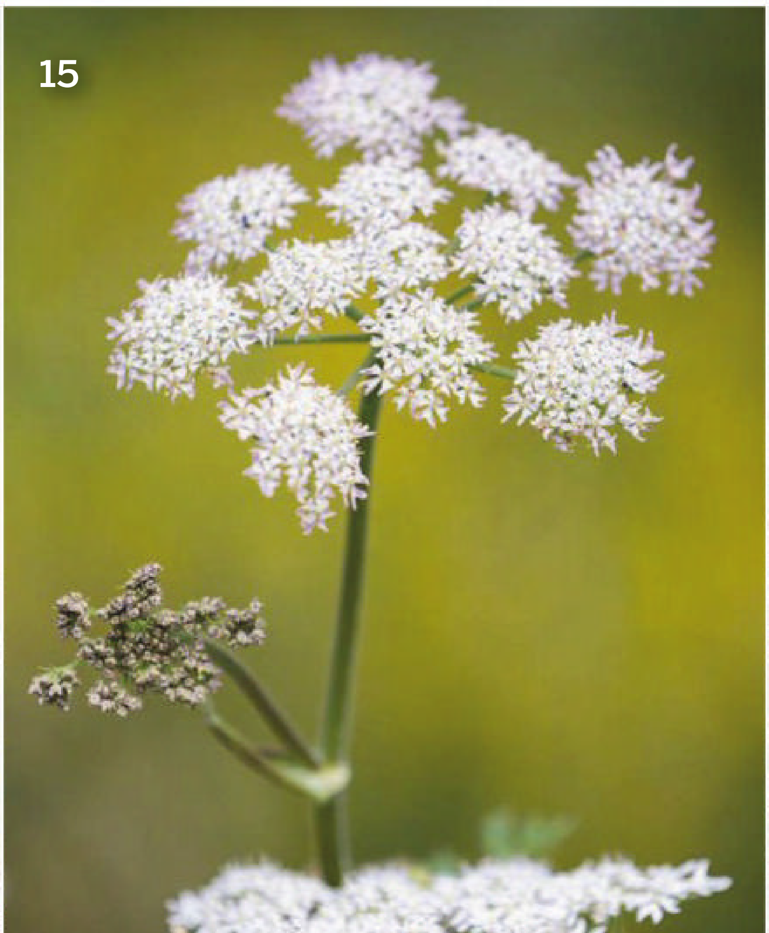
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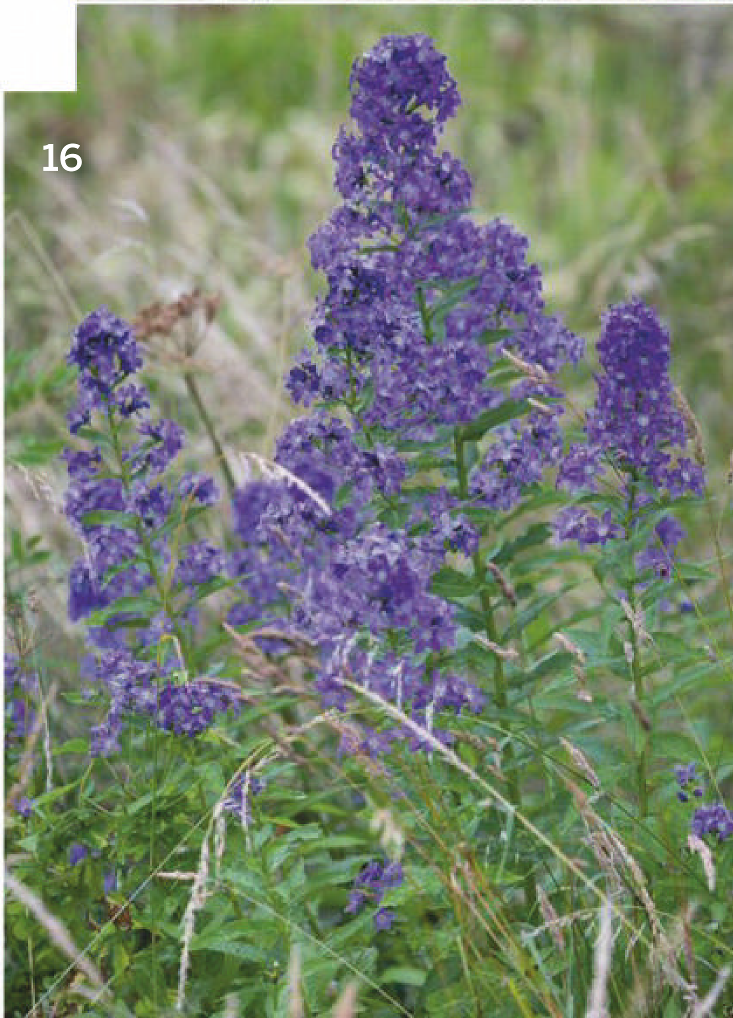
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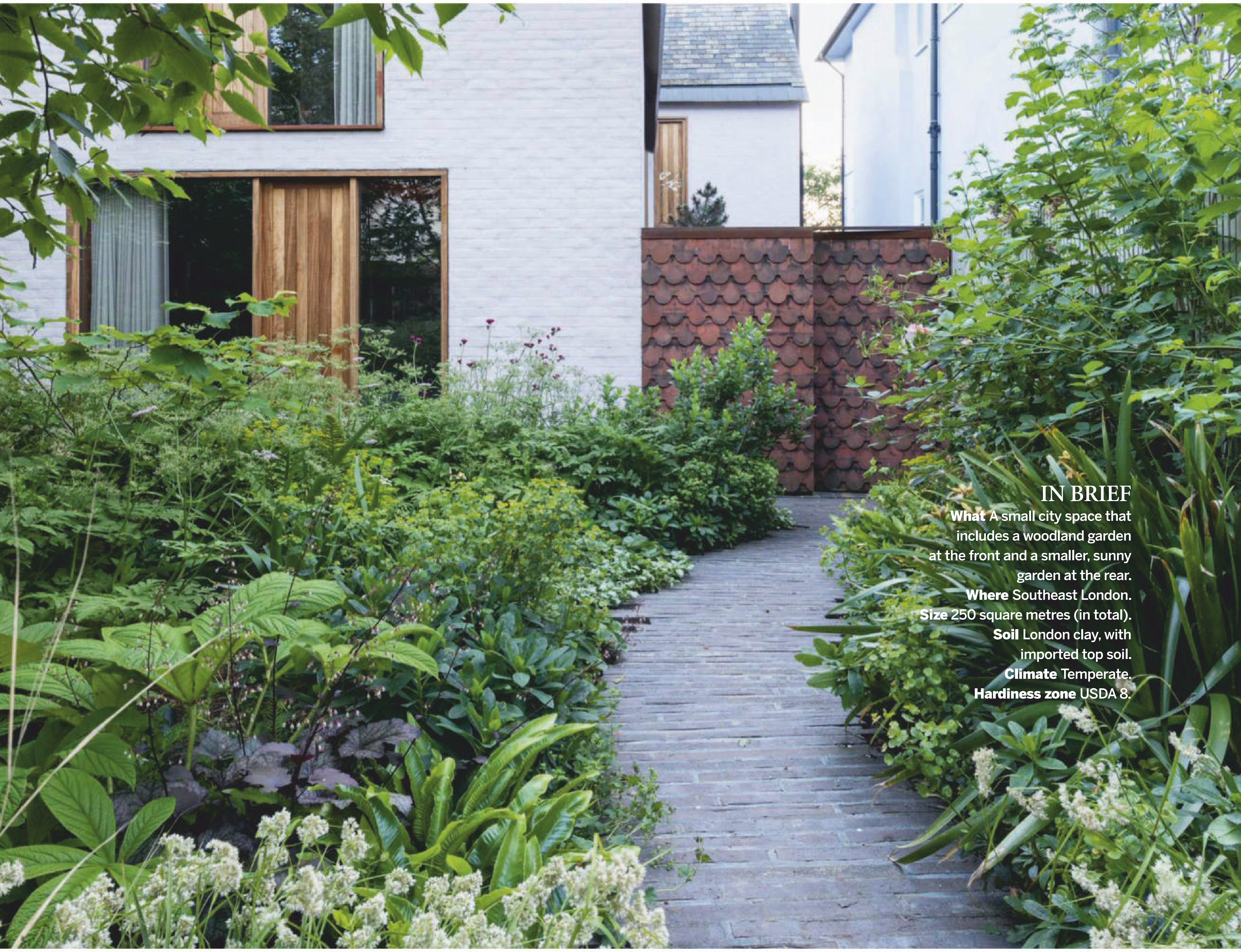
For his own small garden in southeast London, architect John Smart brought in garden designer Jane Brockbank to create a richly planted woodland scheme that would complement his architectural ideas and help connect his newly rebuilt home with neighbouring woodland

Small wonder

WORDS **KENDRA WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

Below left At the rear of the house strong structural plants with bold leaf shapes contrast with soft flowering plants. Umbrellas of *Darmera peltata* loom over dainty clouds of *Saxifraga* x *urbium*, while *Rodgersia aesculifolia* provides a foil to the intense purple of *Aquilegia vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Blue Barlow'.

Below right At the front of the house a brick path leads down an incline through woodland planting that includes *Rodgersia aesculifolia, Heuchera* 'Plum Pudding' and *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae*. The discreet entry is hidden behind a panel of traditional Kent tiles, salvaged from the original coach house that stood on this site.



IN BRIEF

What A small city space that includes a woodland garden at the front and a smaller, sunny garden at the rear.
Where Southeast London.
Size 250 square metres (in total).
Soil London clay, with imported top soil.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

Architects make good landscape designers; it stands to reason. With no interruption of thought from inside to out, there is a logical flow of quality materials. But what to plant in the areas between the well-considered paving, the whole scene framed by large windows? For his own family home in southeast London, John Smart of Craftworks architects decided not to go it alone, sensibly calling in the services of garden designer Jane Brockbank.

"I like working with architects, particularly on their own gardens," says Jane. "They do things that I wouldn't think of doing." It works both ways. John was keen to have a lawn but over time, Jane has shown him that the planting could be just as rigorous as the building: "There are a few architects I work with who value the outside space as much as the inside, and they're the most fun."

The house is tucked away on a wooded hillside in Sydenham, where London begins to feel like Kent. A square-shaped garden behind the house is smaller than the one in front, which can take a parked car. Three *Betula albosinensis* , faintly pink and peeling, build up privacy from the street while distracting from vehicles. "The concept was for this to be a slice of woodland floor, albeit with the volume turned up," explains Jane. It suits the area and it suits the soil, which is heavy clay beneath 20-50cm of imported top soil.

Narrow pavers make incursions into knee-high planting, indicating where to park and how to get to the house. The entry is disguised behind a solid gate of clay tiles, the kind found on buildings all over Kent and Sussex. They are from the coach house that originally stood on this site, and combined with paving from Denmark (John's wife Siri is Danish), the effect is bucolic-cosmopolitan. Another key element here: the building is pale pink.

As a backdrop, it is warm and flattering, with pink and white a leitmotif in this supercharged woodland. In early summer, lilac-pink cow parsley *Chaerophyllum hirsutum* 'Roseum' is followed by magenta thistles of *Cirsum rivulare* 'Atropurpureum', buoyed by ▷

Clever parking

Ideas for combining parking and planting

Woodland planting is more forgiving for disguising a car-parking area than an expensive screen of topiary. Front gardens can often benefit from a lighter touch and the semi-shaded conditions created by the trio of airy *Betula albosinensis* in this garden is ideal for informal planting below.

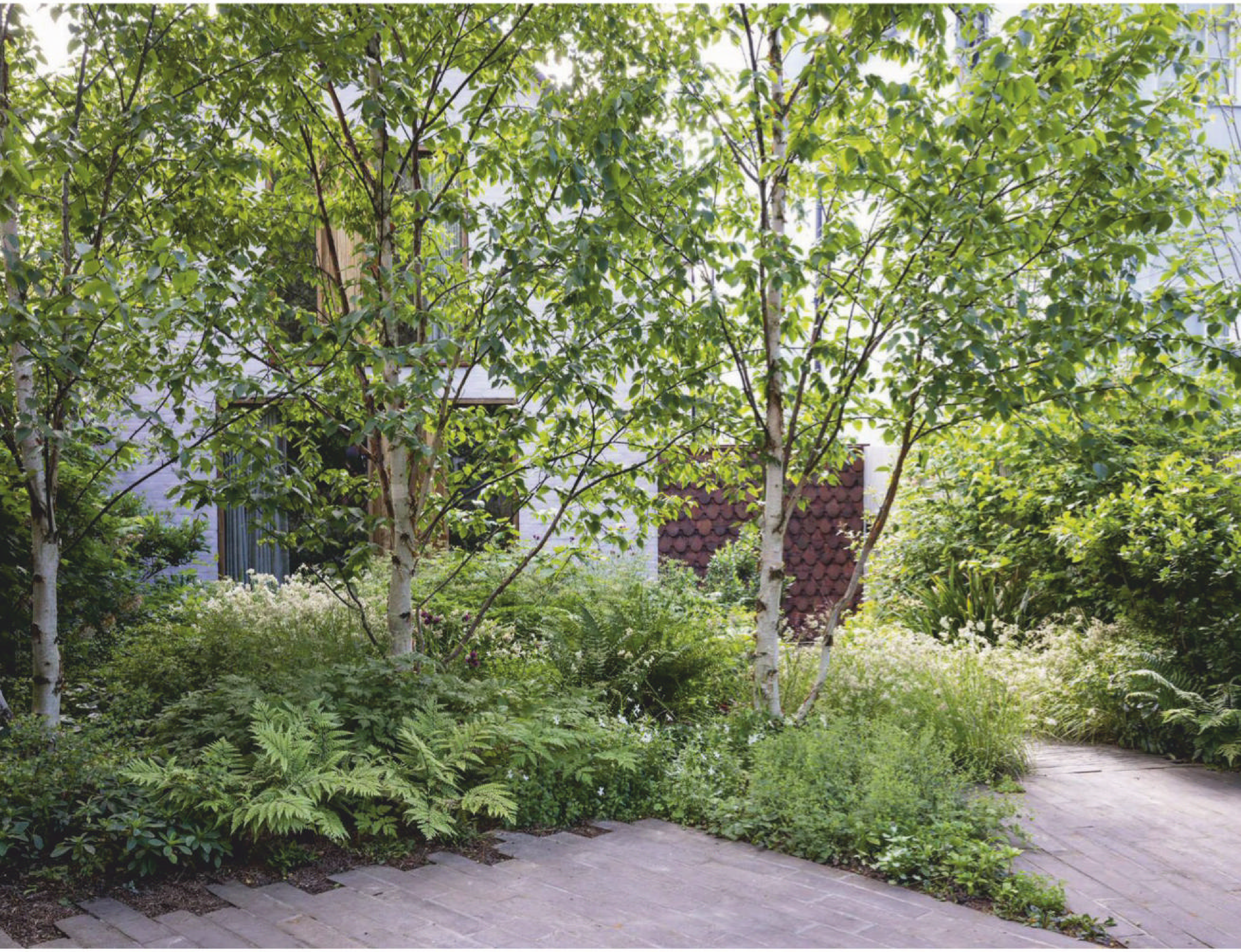
Plant textures become more prominent against hard paving, particularly when the edging is unevenly laid, as it is here. Since plants don't always co-operate in covering the ground perfectly, especially when there is foot traffic, bare patches need to be addressed. Jane uses a mulch of dark, mineralised straw to prevent tricky areas from looking too messy.

Select plants that will keep their shape in winter. The dappled meadow of this front garden is bolstered by a selection of evergreen ferns including *Polystichum setiferum* Divisilobum Group 'Proliferum'. Closer to the edges, by the paving, evergreen groundcover *Pachysandra terminalis* is joined by hardy *Alchemilla erythropoda* and the pure-white, horned pansy *Viola cornuta* Alba Group.

Planting isn't the only way to hide cars from the the sight lines of the house. In this garden Jane spaded and raked new topsoil to different heights, creating undulating landforms close to the front windows. These not only help to block out parked cars but create a feature in their own right.

Below left Close to house, magenta flowerheads of *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum' punctuate a froth of *Luzula nivea,* backed by seedheads of *Chaerophyllum hirsutum*. Foliage comes to the fore at the planting edges, with the fern *Athyrium filix-femina* 'Plumosum Cristatum' spilling on to the paving.

Below right Between the house and the parking area, three *Betula albosinensis* provide dappled shade for meadow planting and ferns. These include *Polystichum setiferum* Divisilobum Group 'Proliferum' and *Dryopteris filix-mas*, which grow to a considerable height and help to soften the view of cars and the street.



▷ snowy *Luzula nivea*. Fresh green is the main foil, with evergreens only making up a quarter of both gardens. Along the boundary, several *Viburnum opulus* 'Roseum' alternate with David Austin's soft pink *Rosa* The Alexandra Rose (= 'Ausday'), an upmarket dog rose in an edited native hedge.

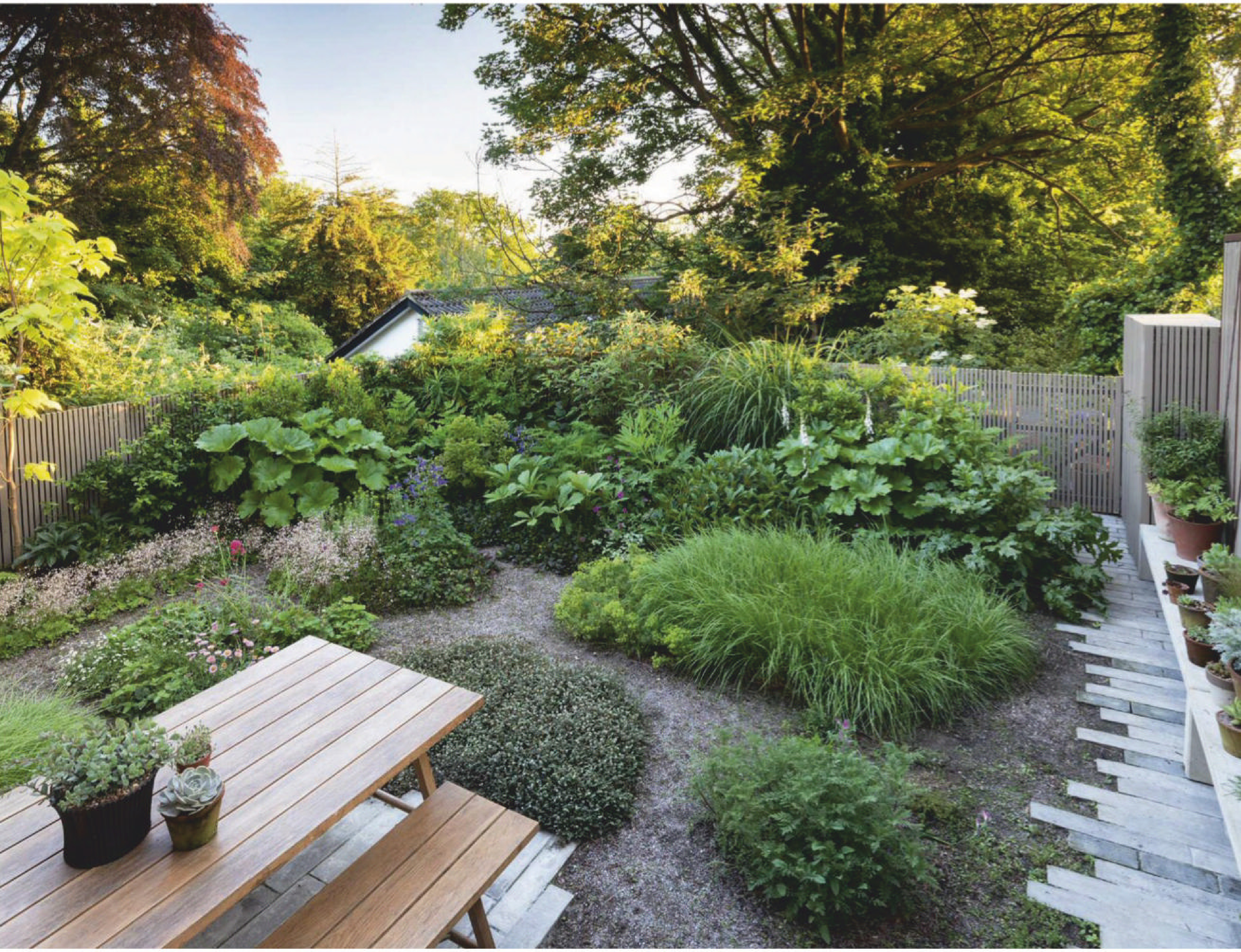
Down an incline, on the other side of the house, the garden tells a different story. "It's primarily about texture," says Jane. "Colour is a bonus, and it's quite muted." There are further variations on pink, including *Erigeron* 'Dimity' and clouds of pale *Saxifraga* x *urbium* flowers hovering on red stems. Big leaves of *Darmera peltata* and *Rodgersia aesculifolia* put a lid on this daintiness, with taller, structural plants, such as *Euphorbia mellifera*, *Arbutus unedo* and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Silberfeder' hitting the boundary at the back. Closer to the house, *Sesleria autumnalis* is spread out on the ground like a couple of shaggy rugs. "It's all about the shifts," says Jane.

Hidden beneath the planting, wide ovals of edging mark out the beds. These are intersected by bound path gravel, compacted over time for a firm surface. It's ideal for self-seeding plants, such as scabious, fleabane and wild strawberry: "We intentionally allow a bit of that," says Jane. "We've talked about what is allowed and what isn't." And weeding? "Oh yeah, weeds love it." Fortunately for Jane's clients, they have found a gardener to maintain the garden who is "like an angel" and his name, Jonathan Gildersleeves, seems to confirm this.

Bespoke concrete benches are a way of allowing more plants into the garden. Raised above the carefully selected community in the ground, John's collection of mainly green plants creates a tension with the strong lines of hard landscaping, not least the slatted larch fence with its diagonals of Corten steel. This pale conveyor belt of little pots leads the eye toward a quieter, lower perimeter, the wooded hill dropping away below. ☐

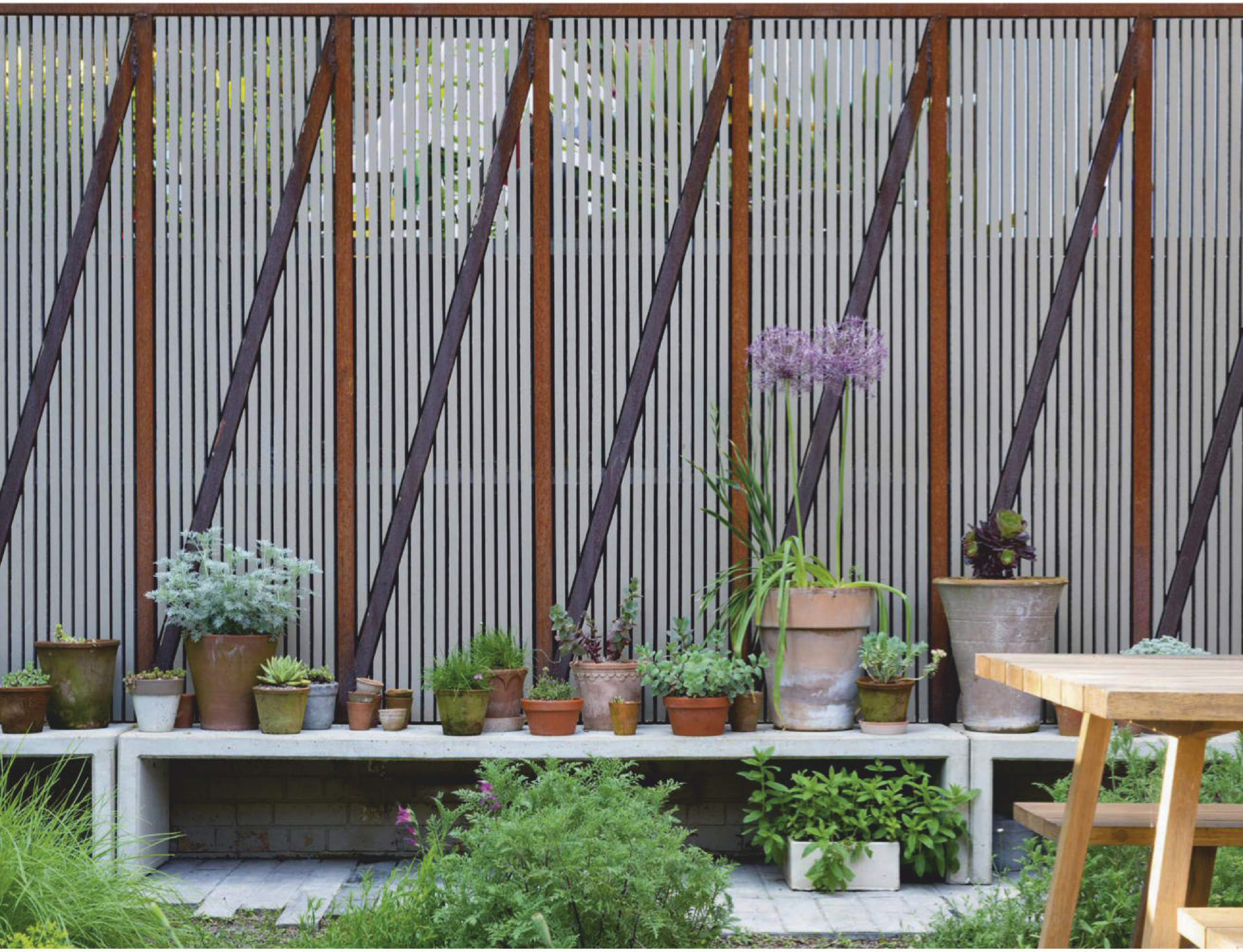
USEFUL INFORMATION

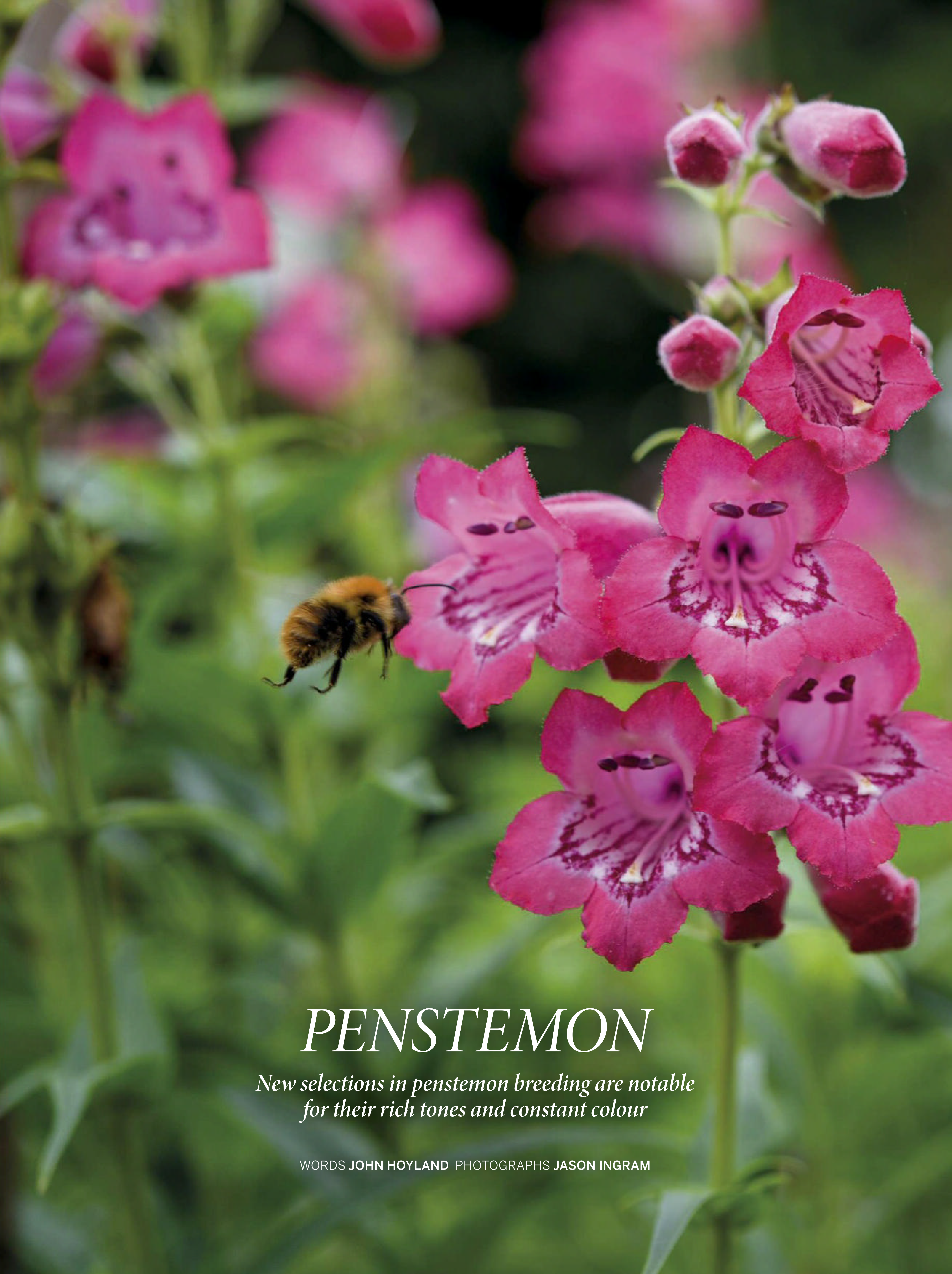
Find out more about Jane's work at **janebrockbank.com**



Below left Jane talked John out of a lawn for the back garden, but she has included two clumps of the grass *Sesleria autumnalis* among other low-growing plants, such as *Acaena microphylla* 'Kupferteppich' close to the dining area. Beyond a tightly planted mix of taller shrubs and grasses largely cover the low larch fence helping to blend the garden with the woodland beyond.

Below right Owner John Smart designed the slatted, larch fence, reinforced with Corten steel. He also commissioned the concrete benches to provide more opportunities to display plants in pots. Neon strip lighting beneath the benches bathes the evening garden in a pink glow.

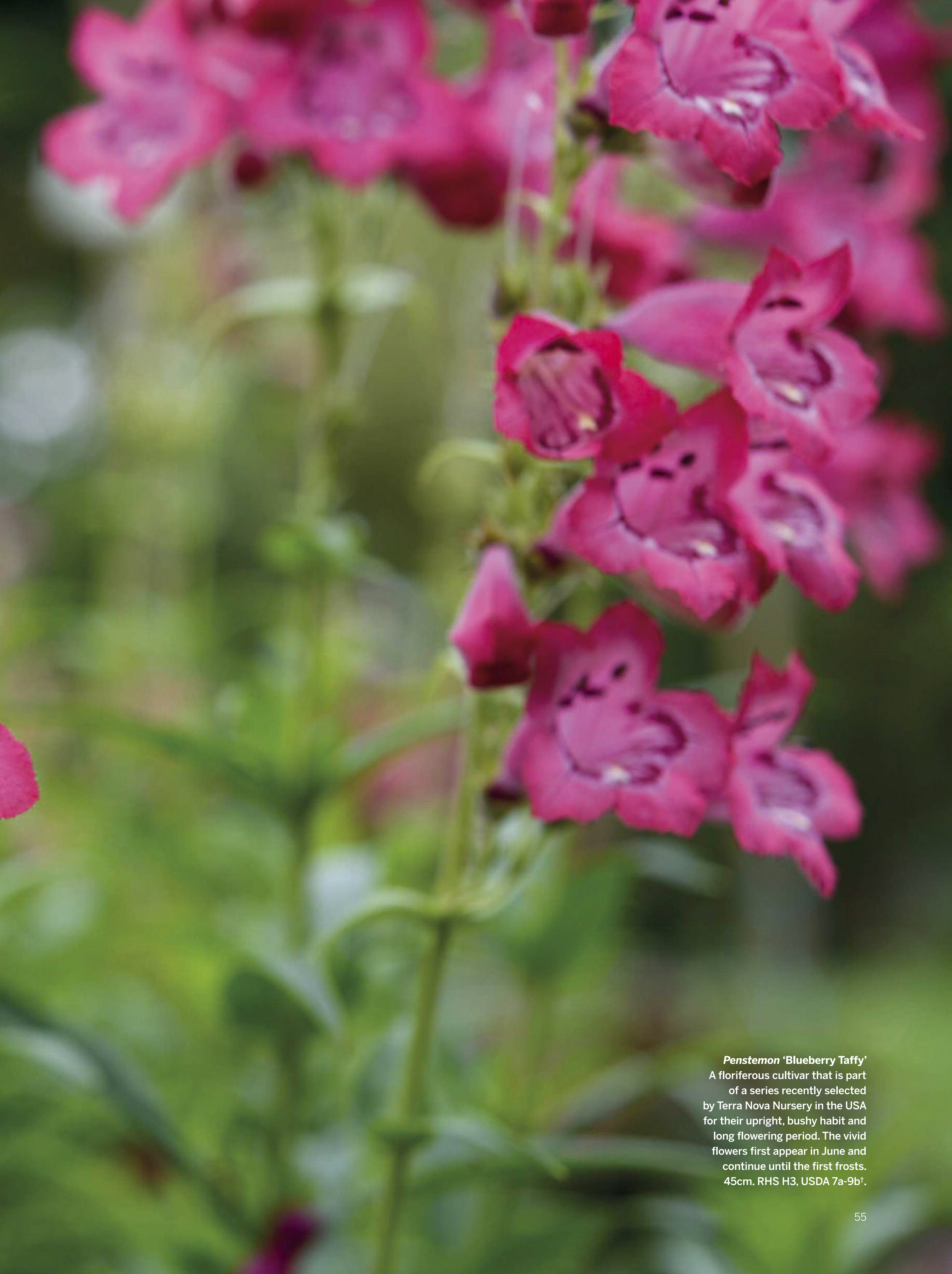




PENSTEMON

New selections in penstemon breeding are notable for their rich tones and constant colour

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



***Penstemon* 'Blueberry Taffy'**
A floriferous cultivar that is part of a series recently selected by Terra Nova Nursery in the USA for their upright, bushy habit and long flowering period. The vivid flowers first appear in June and continue until the first frosts. 45cm. RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b†.

Few herbaceous perennials are as generous as penstemons. Many start flowering in midsummer and, long after other plants are exhausted, will carry the garden on until the first frosts. So long flowering and floriferous are they that they were used as bedding plants by the Victorians, who planted up whole borders with them to fill the garden with summer colour. Margery Fish, a gardener and writer in the middle of the 20th century, admitted to forever 'preaching the benefits of *Penstemon* for continual colour'.

By the time Fish was gardening, penstemons had been out of fashion for several decades. The loss of gardeners and ornamental gardens during two World Wars saw the end of the practice of bedding out and the disappearance of many cultivars. Viruses, encouraged by decades of taking cuttings of sick plants, were widespread and a run of cold winters in the middle of the 20th century killed off the more tender forms. This created the false impression that penstemons were feeble plants that needed expert care.

During the period the plant was out of favour a few nurserymen remained steadfast ambassadors of the genus. Alan Bloom championed two Swiss-bred hybrids, 'Andenken an Friedrich Hahn', which was given the English name 'Garnet', and 'Schonholzeri', named 'Firebird' in Britain. In the 1960s a Penstemon enthusiast in Worcestershire named Ron Sitwell introduced a number of large-flowered hybrids named after birds. Later, in the same county, Edward Wilson began producing a group of vigorous and long-flowering hybrids that have become known as Pensham Penstemons.

A plant that is easy to grow and to propagate, is not susceptible to pests and diseases and which has brightly coloured flowers for months on end is eventually going to attract the attention of commercial plant producers. Plant breeders in the UK and North America have recently rediscovered the virtues of penstemons and the past decade has seen lots of new introductions. All the modern forms keep the characteristic tubular colourful flowers that give easy access to bees and butterflies.

The new plants are usually released and marketed as part of a group that have similar characteristics. The Cha Cha Series from the USA, for example, is a group of five hybrids bred to be compact, frost hardy and drought tolerant. Hardiness is a feature of the Red Riding Hood Series and is combined with prolific flowering in plants with vibrant flowers. Plant breeders are increasingly producing plants suited for smaller gardens and the Rock Candy Series has compact plants just 30cm tall. As the name suggests, the Patio Bells Series has been developed specifically for containers and has upright growth on short plants and a long flowering period.

Penstemon is the largest family of flowering plants endemic to North America with about 250 species found in habitats ranging from forests to alpine meadows and prairies. Some are small, low-growing plants suitable for rock gardens and alpine houses and some are taller, more floriferous forms which appeal to modern gardeners. Most of the new hybrids are descended from just a handful of species, mainly *P. hartwegii*, a semi-evergreen species from Mexico. As its names suggests, the flowers of *P. digitalis* resemble those of a small foxglove. Selections with dark foliage have been made and, most recently, several cultivars with glossy purple foliage have appeared. *P. digitalis* lasts well in a vase and some new forms are being marketed as making good cut flowers. *P. heterophyllus* has blue flowers and has already been the source of cultivars and hybrids with a range of flowers from amethyst to sky blue. The appetite for blue flowers has led to even more forms being introduced.

Despite there being so many garden forms of *Penstemon* already available, plants breeders are starting to mine the potential that other species may offer in creating new hybrids. The resurgence in popularity of *Penstemon* looks to be fuelled by new forms and new colours, which will hopefully secure the plant's place in our garden palette. □

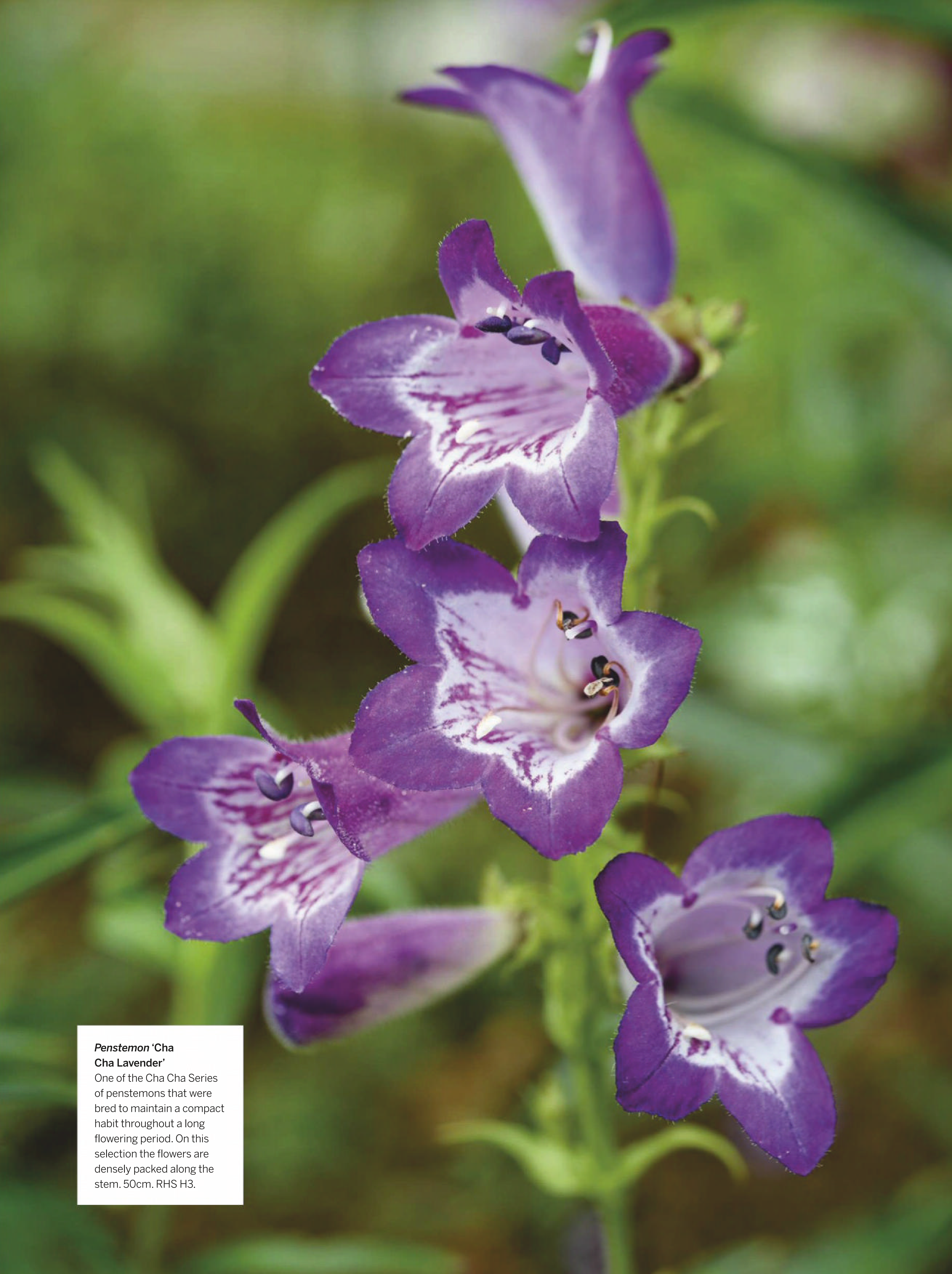
• Author John Hoyland is a plantsman and garden writer. His recommendations for the best penstemons can be found over the next five pages.

Froggery Cottage This garden in Northamptonshire, where most of these images were taken, holds the National Collection of *Penstemon*. Developed over the past 16 years by owner John Lee (above), the garden holds around 435 *Penstemon* species and cultivars, as well as other rare and unusual plants. Open by appointment and for the NGS see website for details. **froggerycottage.com**

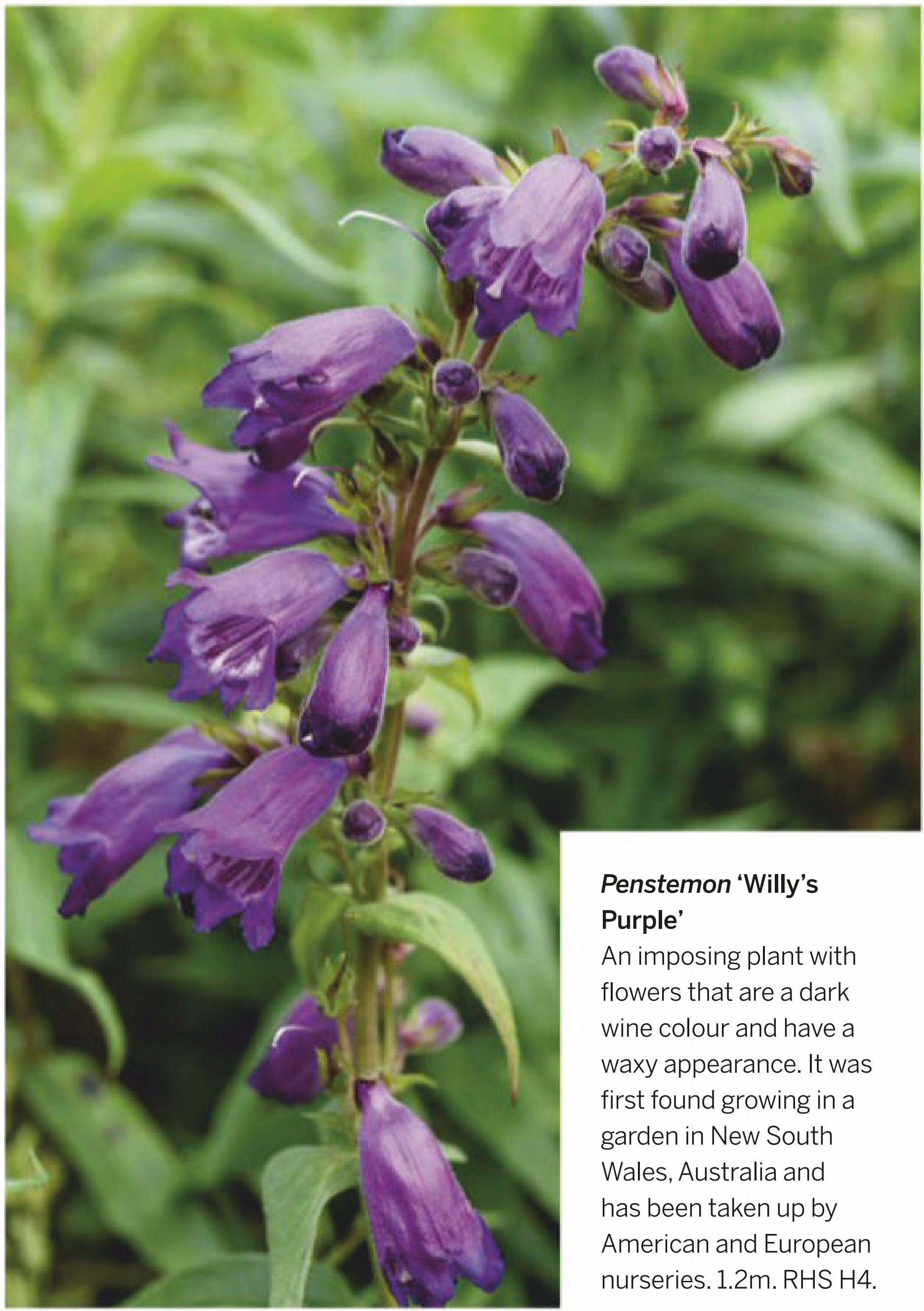
PLANT PROFILE

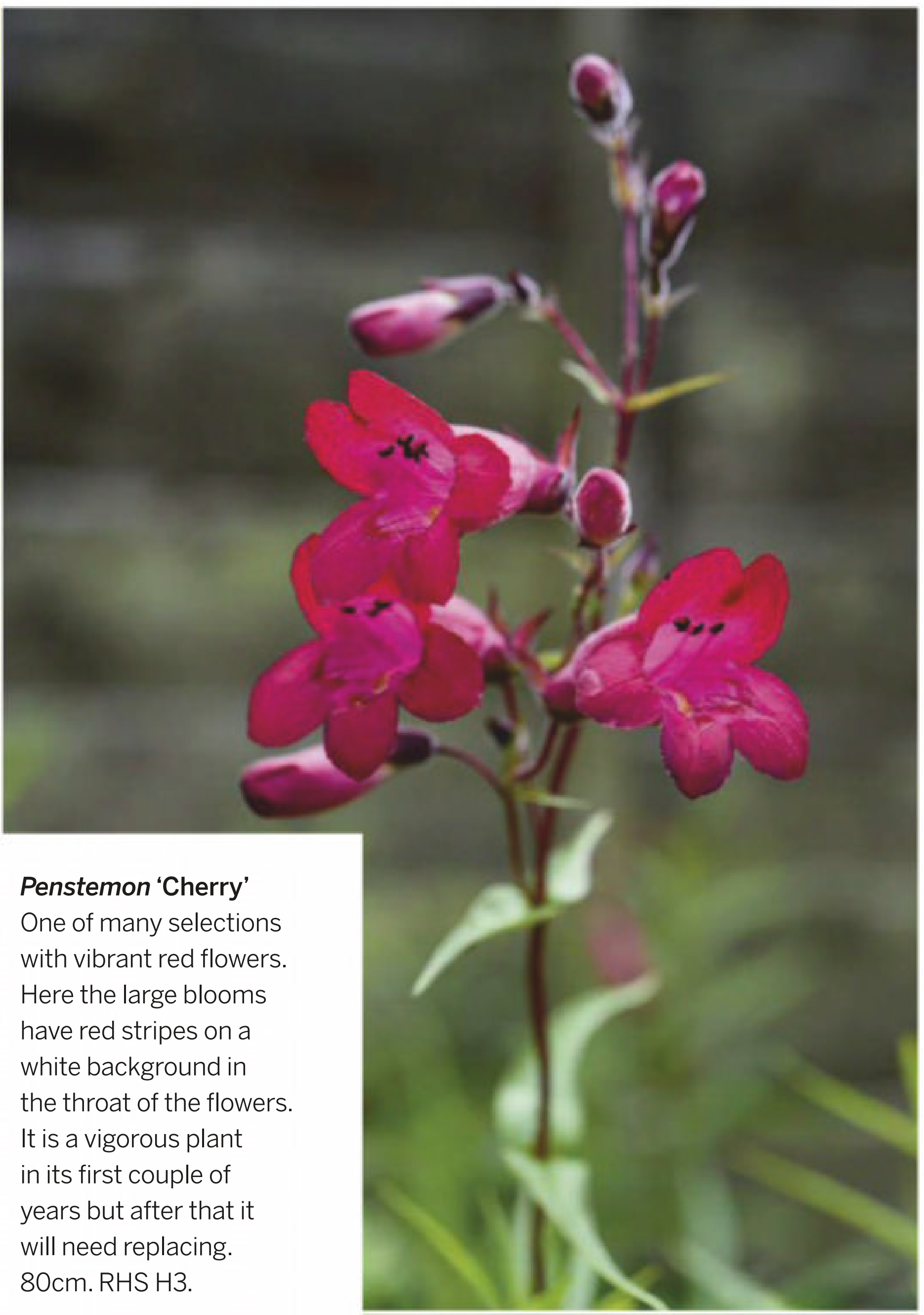
What A genus of about 250 species of semi-evergreen and deciduous perennials grown for their profusion of flamboyant flowers.
Origins Most are native to North America.
Season The main flowering period is early summer to mid-autumn.
Size From 15cm to 1m tall.
Conditions An undemanding and adaptable plant that grows best in well-drained soil in a sunny situation.
Hardiness Very hardy to frost hardy, RHS H3-H5, USDA 4a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



***Penstemon* 'Cha Cha Lavender'**
One of the Cha Cha Series of penstemons that were bred to maintain a compact habit throughout a long flowering period. On this selection the flowers are densely packed along the stem. 50cm. RHS H3.



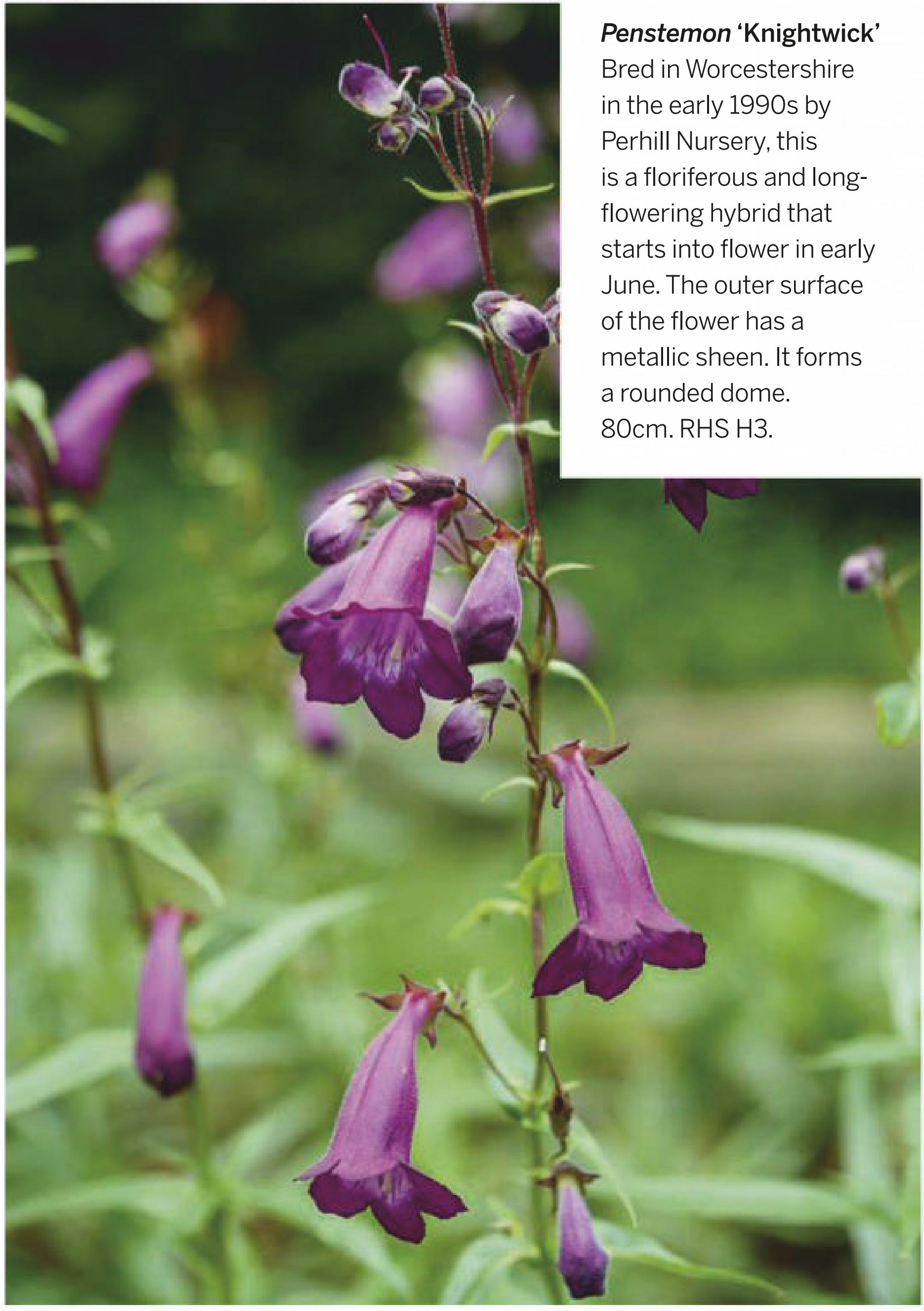


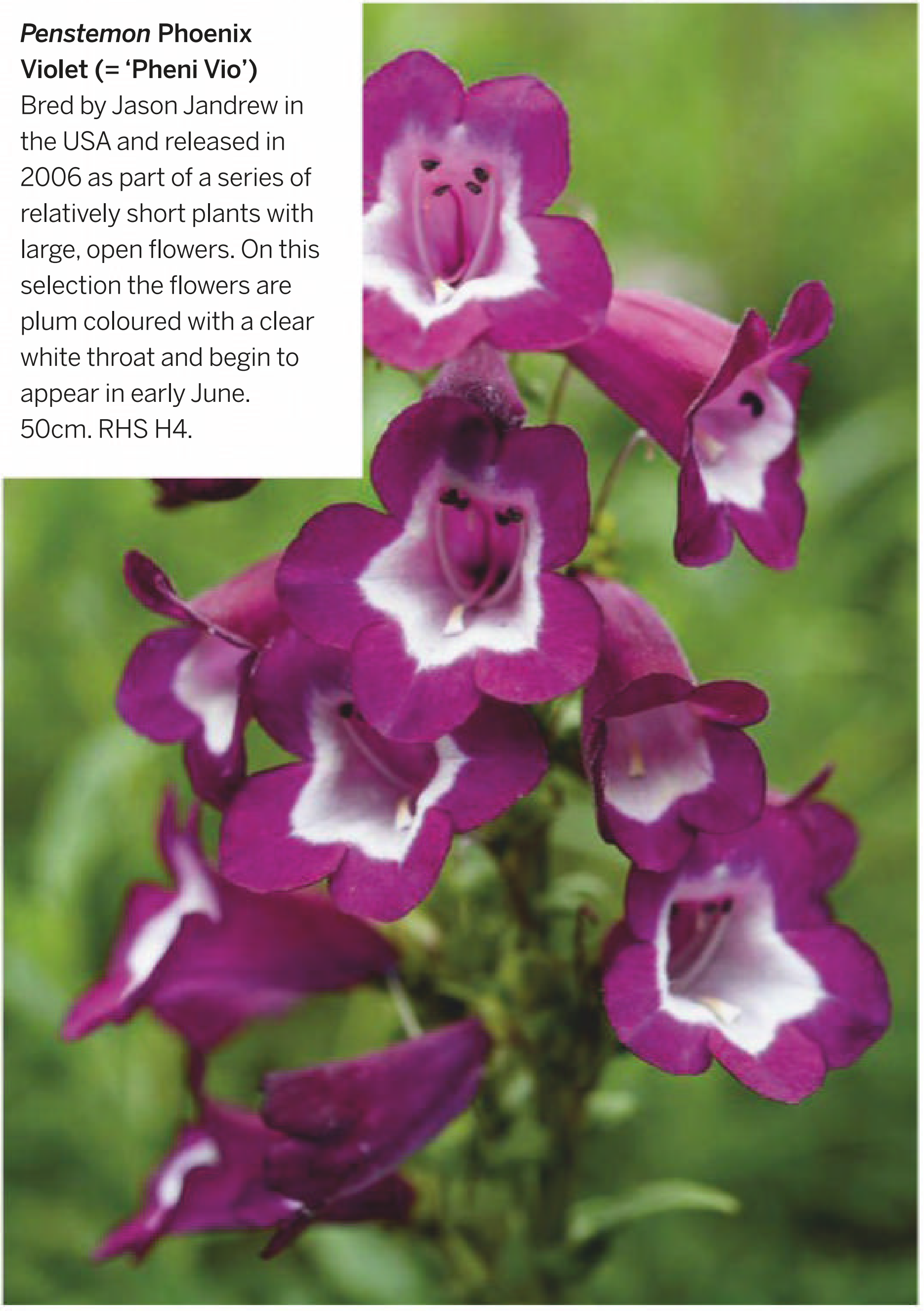
Penstemon 'Willy's Purple'
An imposing plant with flowers that are a dark wine colour and have a waxy appearance. It was first found growing in a garden in New South Wales, Australia and has been taken up by American and European nurseries. 1.2m. RHS H4.

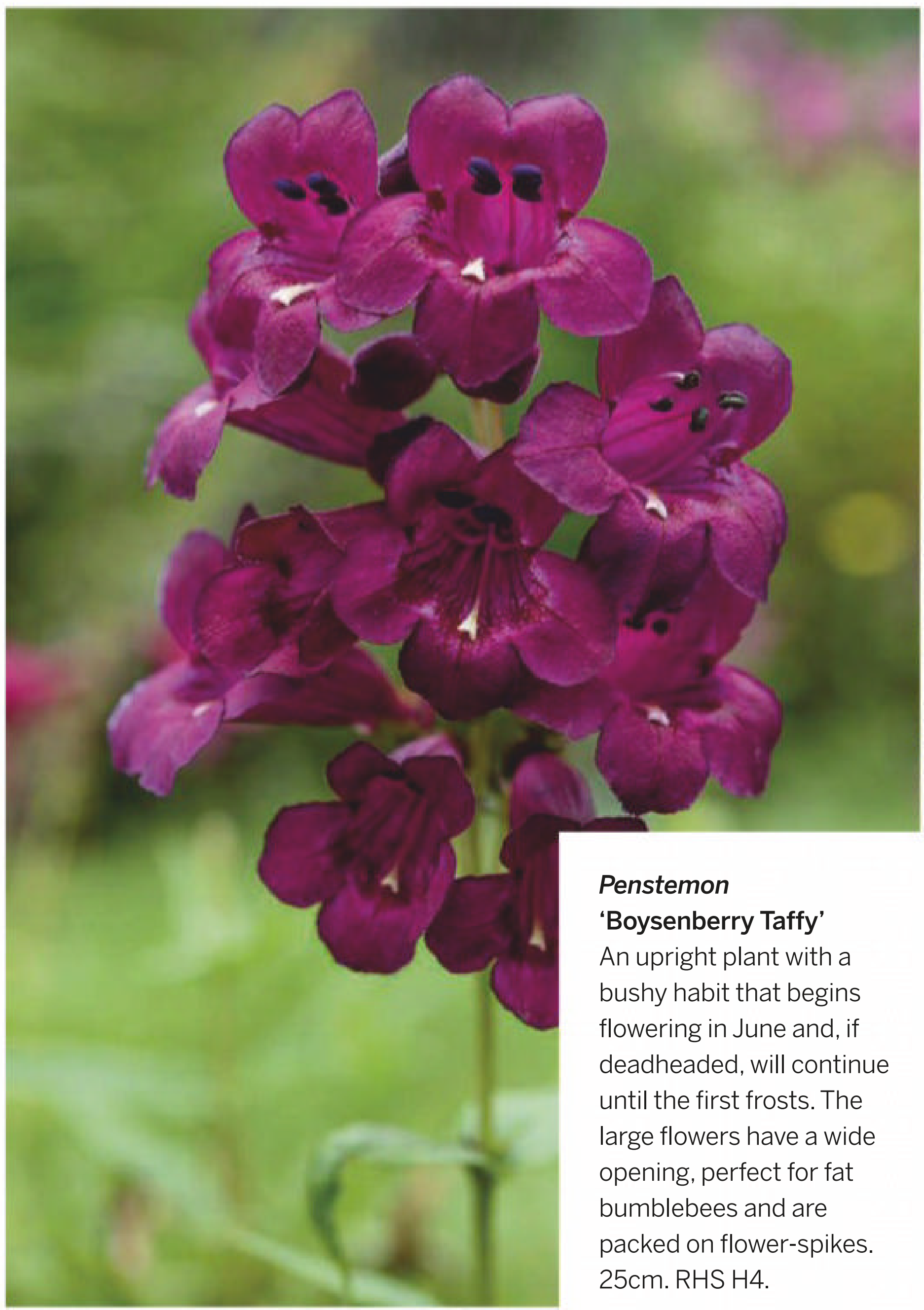
Penstemon 'Cherry'
One of many selections with vibrant red flowers. Here the large blooms have red stripes on a white background in the throat of the flowers. It is a vigorous plant in its first couple of years but after that it will need replacing. 80cm. RHS H3.

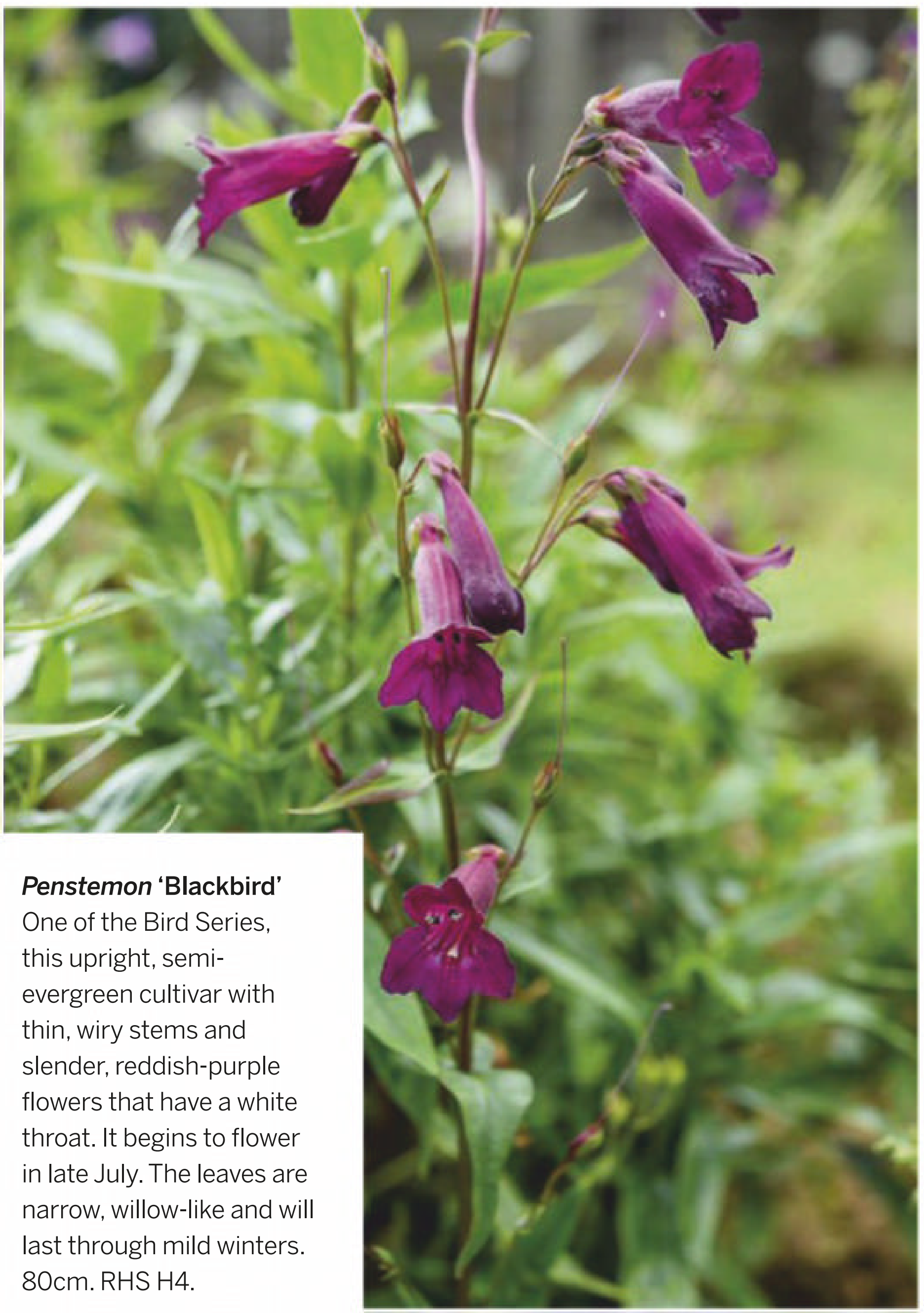
Penstemon 'Knightwick'
Bred in Worcestershire in the early 1990s by Perhill Nursery, this is a floriferous and long-flowering hybrid that starts into flower in early June. The outer surface of the flower has a metallic sheen. It forms a rounded dome. 80cm. RHS H3.

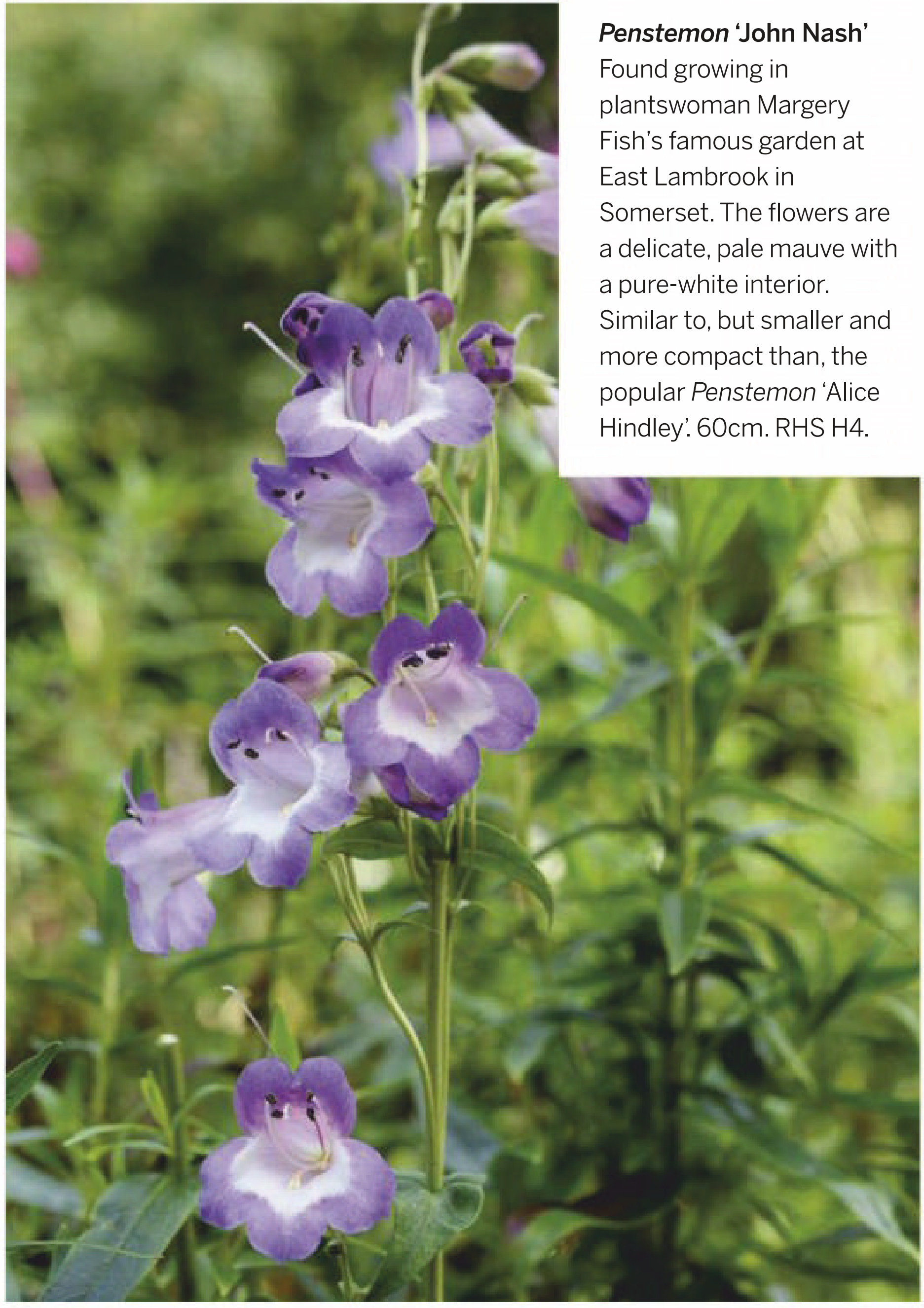
Penstemon Phoenix Violet (= 'Pheni Vio')
Bred by Jason Jandrew in the USA and released in 2006 as part of a series of relatively short plants with large, open flowers. On this selection the flowers are plum coloured with a clear white throat and begin to appear in early June. 50cm. RHS H4.

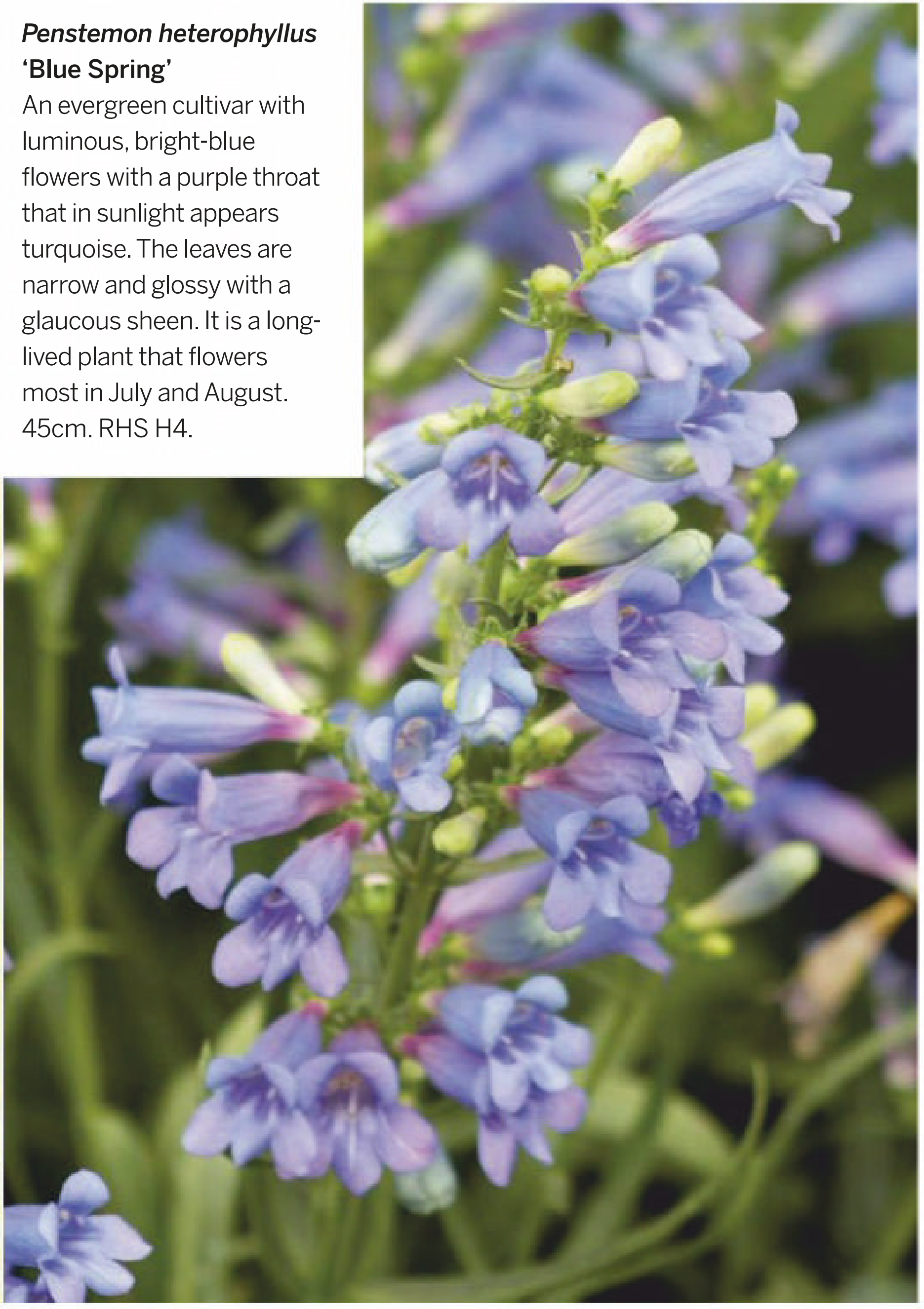












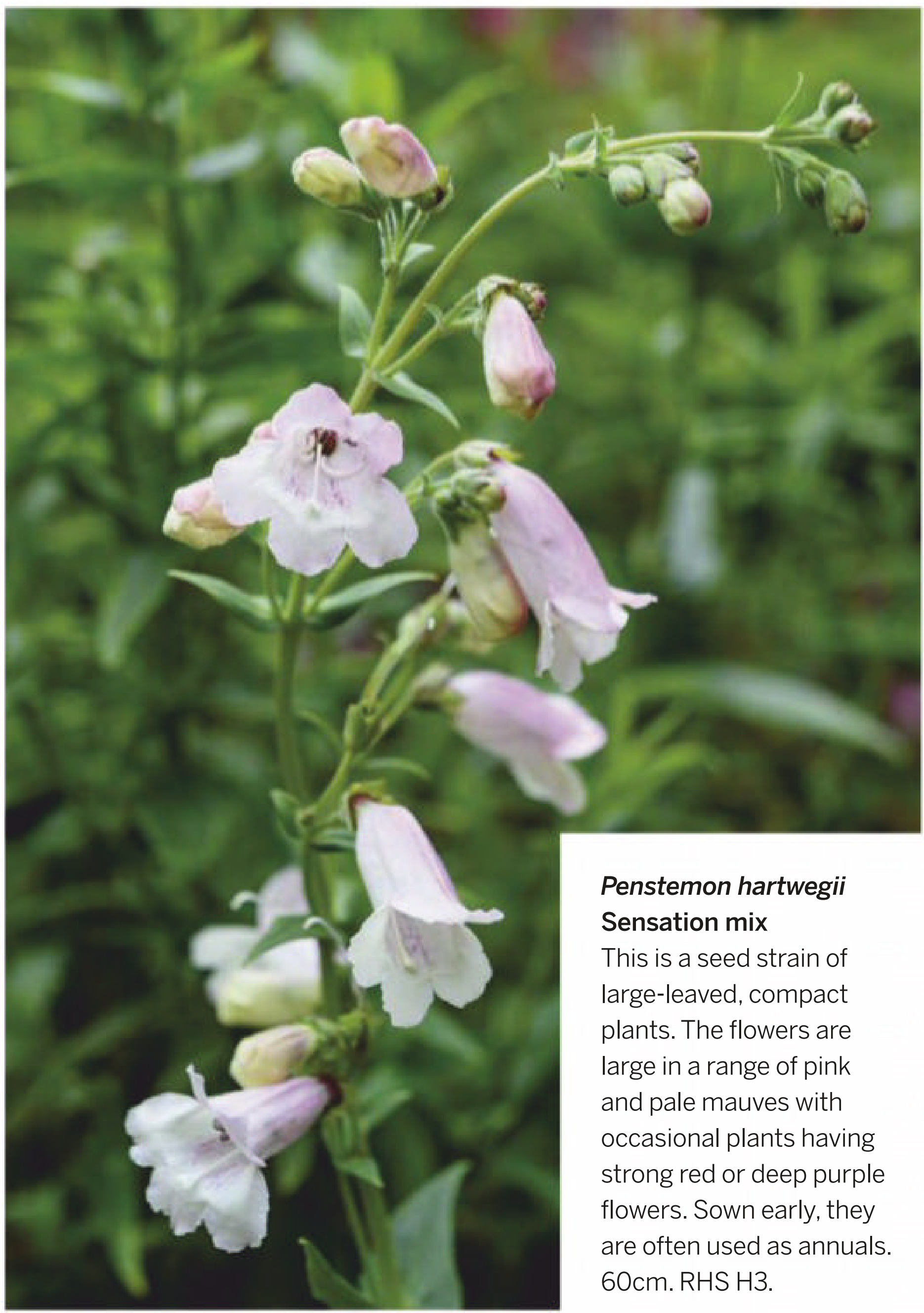
***Penstemon* 'Boysenberry Taffy'**
An upright plant with a bushy habit that begins flowering in June and, if deadheaded, will continue until the first frosts. The large flowers have a wide opening, perfect for fat bumblebees and are packed on flower-spikes. 25cm. RHS H4.

***Penstemon* 'Blackbird'**
One of the Bird Series, this upright, semi-evergreen cultivar with thin, wiry stems and slender, reddish-purple flowers that have a white throat. It begins to flower in late July. The leaves are narrow, willow-like and will last through mild winters. 80cm. RHS H4.

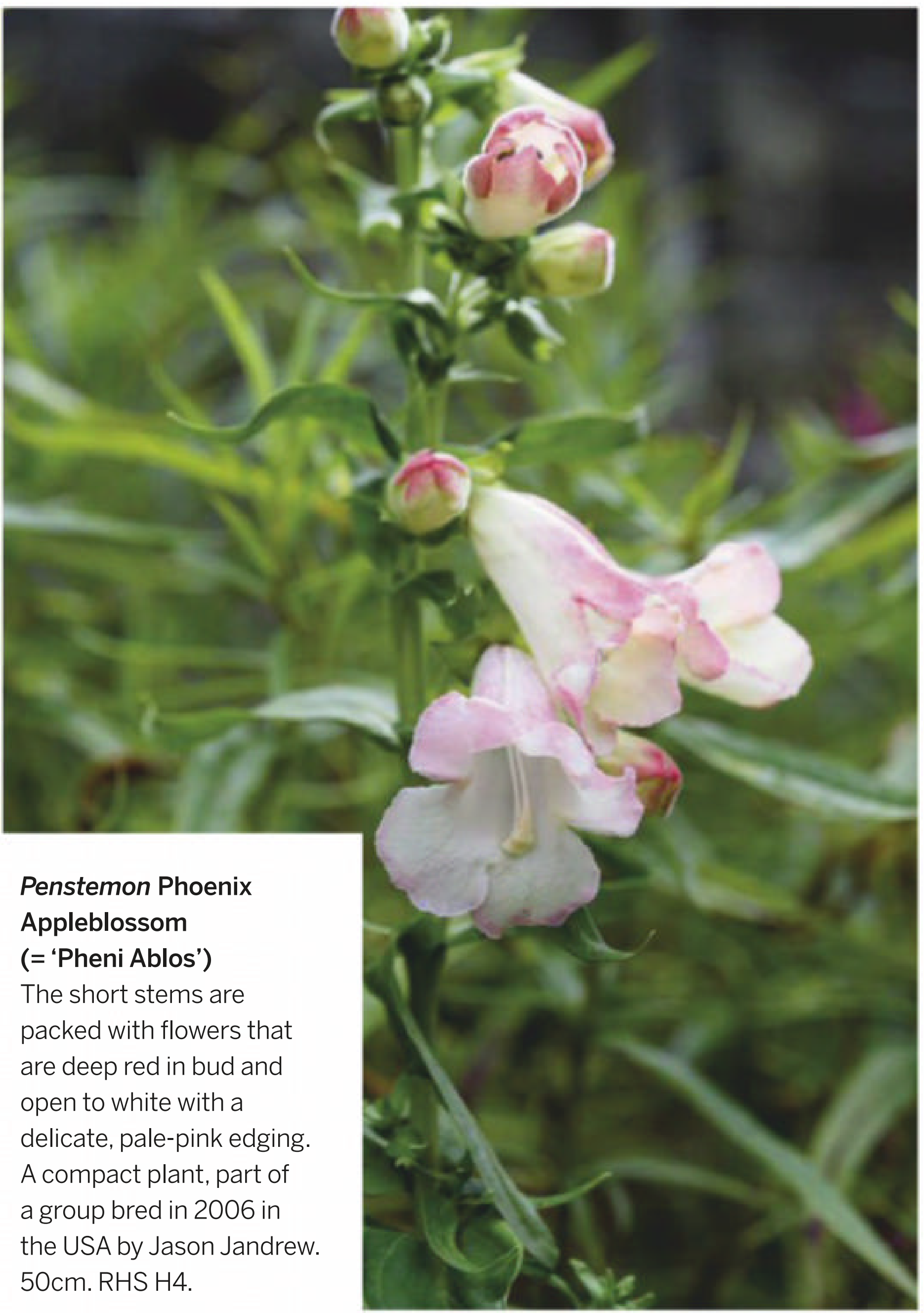
***Penstemon* 'John Nash'**
Found growing in plantswoman Margery Fish's famous garden at East Lambrook in Somerset. The flowers are a delicate, pale mauve with a pure-white interior. Similar to, but smaller and more compact than, the popular *Penstemon* 'Alice Hindley'. 60cm. RHS H4.

***Penstemon heterophyllus* 'Blue Spring'**
An evergreen cultivar with luminous, bright-blue flowers with a purple throat that in sunlight appears turquoise. The leaves are narrow and glossy with a glaucous sheen. It is a long-lived plant that flowers most in July and August. 45cm. RHS H4.

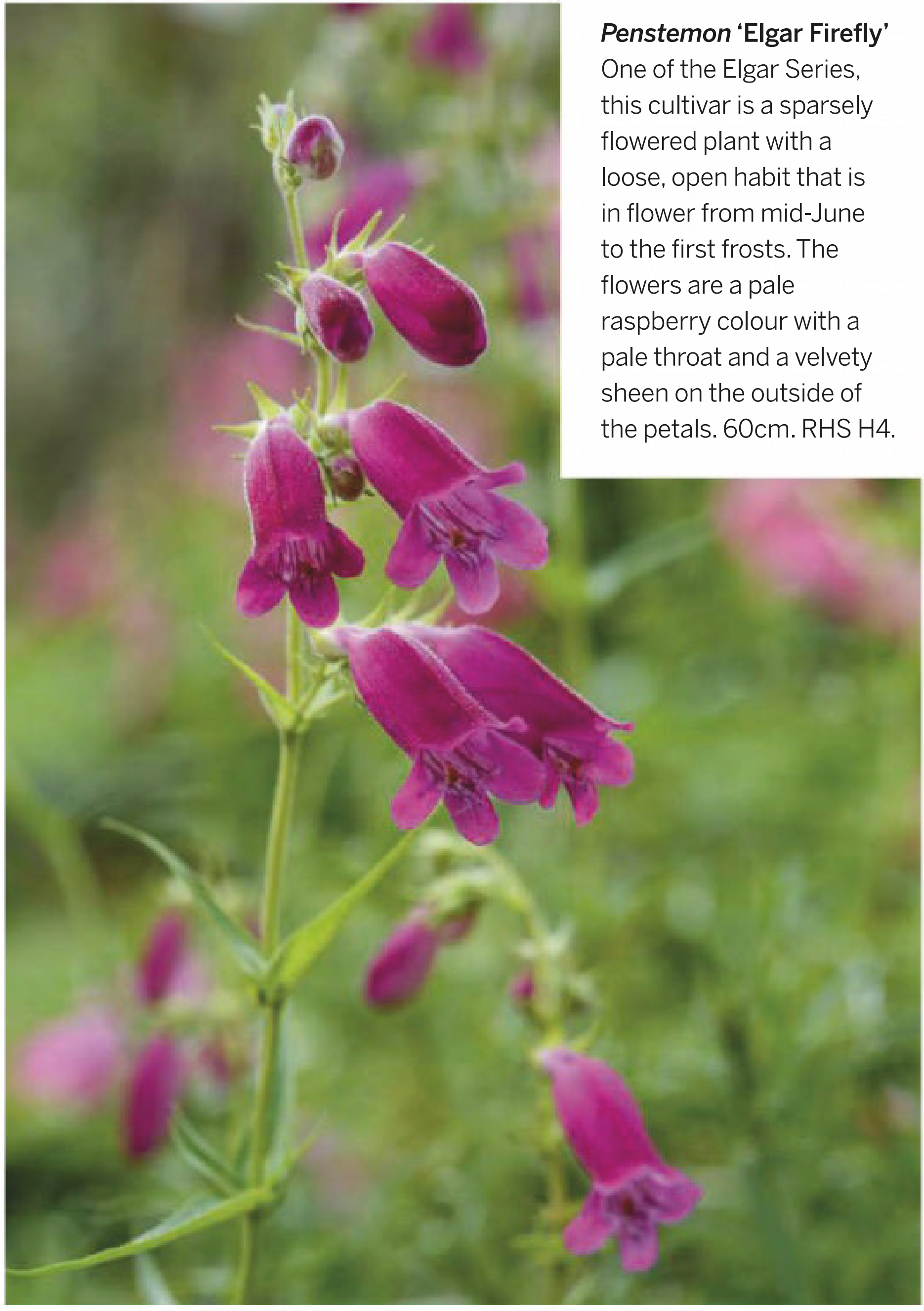
PENSTEMON HETEROPHYLLUS 'BLUE SPRING' BY SARAH LEE / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES



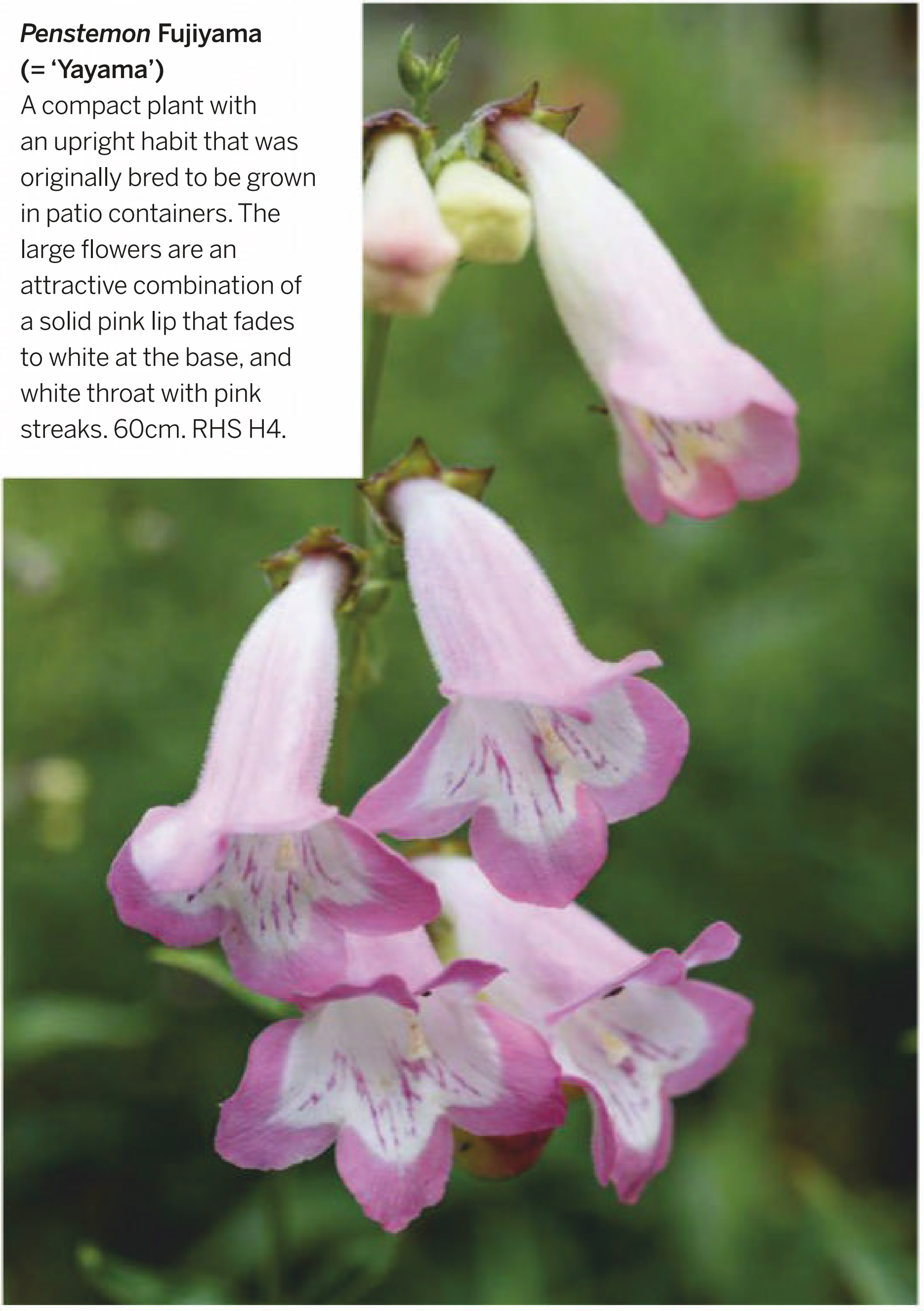
Penstemon hartwegii **Sensation mix**
This is a seed strain of large-leaved, compact plants. The flowers are large in a range of pink and pale mauves with occasional plants having strong red or deep purple flowers. Sown early, they are often used as annuals. 60cm. RHS H3.



Penstemon **Phoenix Appleblossom (= 'Pheni Ablos')**
The short stems are packed with flowers that are deep red in bud and open to white with a delicate, pale-pink edging. A compact plant, part of a group bred in 2006 in the USA by Jason Jandrew. 50cm. RHS H4.



Penstemon **'Elgar Firefly'**
One of the Elgar Series, this cultivar is a sparsely flowered plant with a loose, open habit that is in flower from mid-June to the first frosts. The flowers are a pale raspberry colour with a pale throat and a velvety sheen on the outside of the petals. 60cm. RHS H4.



Penstemon **Fujiyama (= 'Yayama')**
A compact plant with an upright habit that was originally bred to be grown in patio containers. The large flowers are an attractive combination of a solid pink lip that fades to white at the base, and white throat with pink streaks. 60cm. RHS H4.

***Penstemon digitalis* 'Mystica'**
A seed strain widely used in the cut-flower industry. The foliage has a plum-coloured flush, most noticeable in spring, which contrasts with the dense lavender-pink flowerheads. It produces an abundance of flowers in late June and early July. 75cm. RHS H5.

***Penstemon* 'Osprey'**
A stately hybrid that has been popular since it was introduced in the 1960s. The fat flowers are a soft white with a pale-pink picotee edge. It is one of the Bird Series, a group of penstemons, raised in Evesham in Worcestershire and named after birds. 1m. AGM*. RHS H3.

Cultivation

Except in very cold or very wet gardens, penstemons should be easy to grow throughout the UK. They are at their happiest basking in a sunny situation in well-drained soil. Give them plenty of room to grow where they are not crowded out by other plants.

Regularly cutting down old flower spikes during the summer will prolong flowering and help keep the plant vigorous. After a couple of years plants often become woody and straggly, so need pruning to keep them in shape and to produce new growth.

They are not susceptible to specific pests or diseases and often appear in lists of plants that deer and rabbits avoid. Treat that advice with scepticism if your garden is visited by either of these animals and try a couple of plants before investing in what might turn out to be deer or rabbit food.

Producing as many flowers as most penstemons do takes a lot of energy, so add compost to the soil when planting. Mulching around the plant in the autumn will feed the soil and also help protect the base of the plant from frosts. Penstemons with narrow leaves tend to be the hardiest. In general, the broader and fatter the leaves, the more tender the plant. As an insurance against cold or wet winter it is advisable to take cuttings of tender penstemons.

Taking cuttings of penstemons is easy, and if you are new to taking cuttings penstemons are good plants to start with. The cuttings don't require any special equipment other than a cool, light, airy and frost-free place to keep them in over winter.

Take the cuttings between mid-July and mid-September. Fill a 9cm pot with cutting compost or a 50:50 mix of compost and grit. Collect 10-12cm-long tips of a shoots that do not have flowers. Make the cut with sharp secateurs or a sharp knife just below where the leaves join the stem. Remove the leaves from the bottom half of the cuttings. Cut off the top third of the remaining leaves – this looks drastic but will reduce the amount of moisture the cutting loses. Insert the cutting to about two-thirds of its depth. You should get four or five cuttings into a 9cm pot.

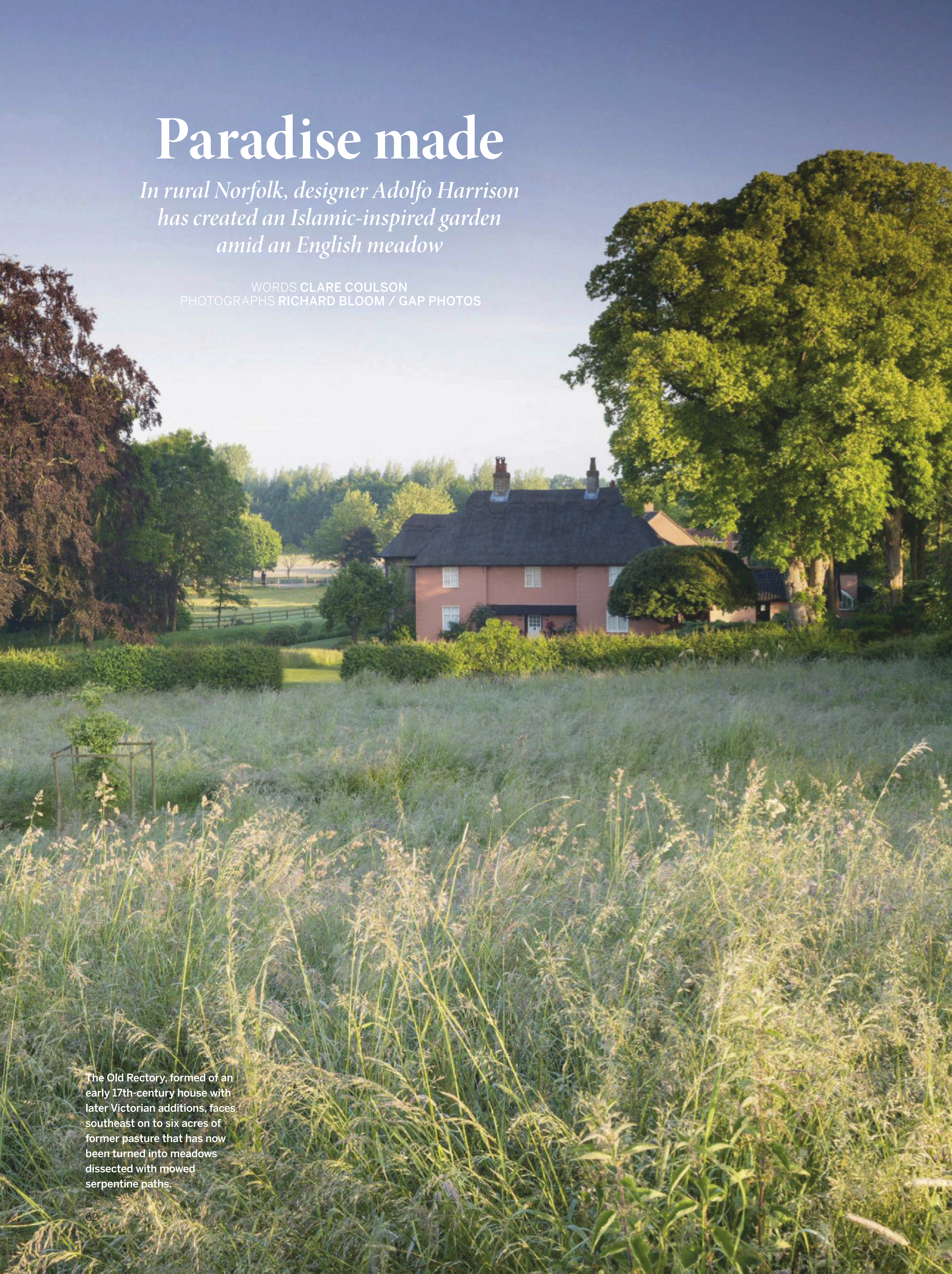
Water the pot and keep it in a cool place away from direct sunlight. Keep the compost moist but not wet. In a couple of weeks the cutting will have rooted. You can either pot up the young plants immediately or in the following spring. Both cuttings and newly potted young pants should be kept away from frosts.

Where to see and buy

- **Binny Plants**
  Binny Estate, Ecclesmachan Road, Uphall, West Lothian EH52 6NL.
  Tel 01506 858931,
  binnyplants.com
- **Froggery Cottage***
  85 Breakleys Road,
  Desborough,
  Northamptonshire NN14 2PT.
  froggerycottage.com
  Open on selected dates.
- **Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants**
  Priory Lane Nursery, Freefolk Priors, Whitchurch,
  Hampshire RG28 7FA.
  Tel 01256 896533,
  hardysplants.co.uk
- **Hayloft Plants**[†]
  The Pack House,
  Manor Farm Nursery,
  Pensham, Pershore,
  Worcestershire WR10 3HB.
  Tel 01386 554440,
  hayloft.co.uk
- **Pershore College**
  Avonbank, Pershore,
  Worcestershire WR10 3JP.
  Tel 01386 551149,
  wcg.ac.uk/plantcentre
  Nursery is normally wholesale only, but check website for public opening days.

*National Collection Holder.

[†] Readers can save up to £27 and receive free p&p on a specially selected Penstemon collection from Hayloft Plants. See page 138 for details.

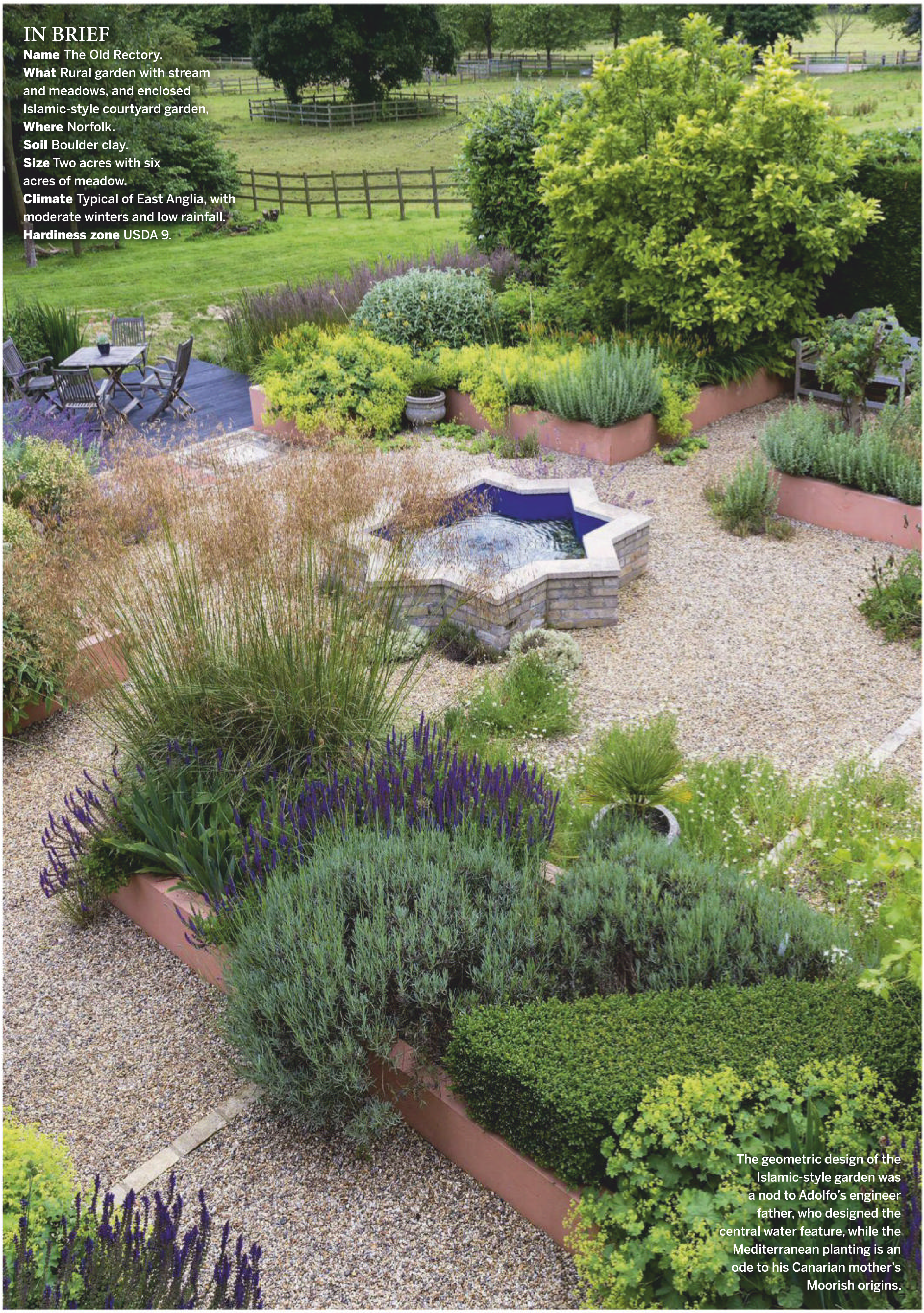


Paradise made

In rural Norfolk, designer Adolfo Harrison has created an Islamic-inspired garden amid an English meadow

WORDS **CLARE COULSON**
PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS**

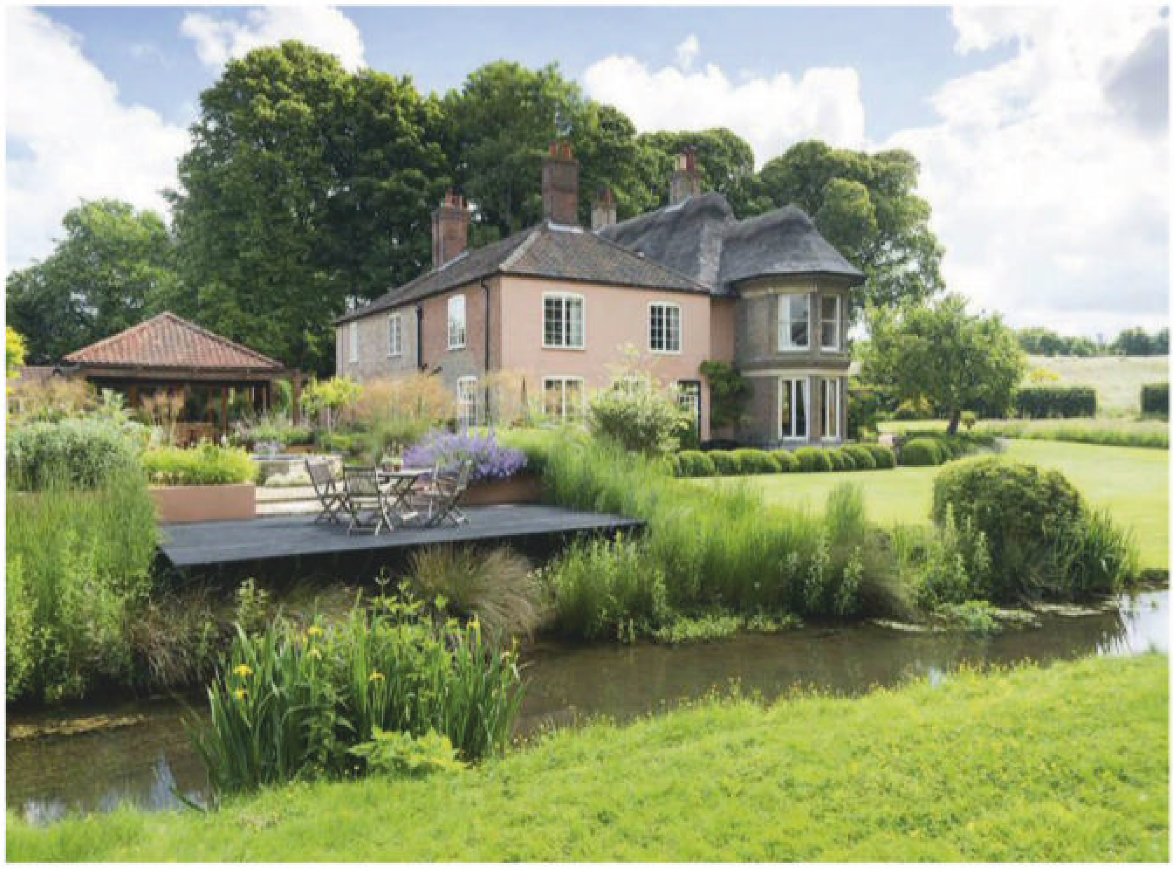
The Old Rectory, formed of an early 17th-century house with later Victorian additions, faces southeast on to six acres of former pasture that has now been turned into meadows dissected with mowed serpentine paths.

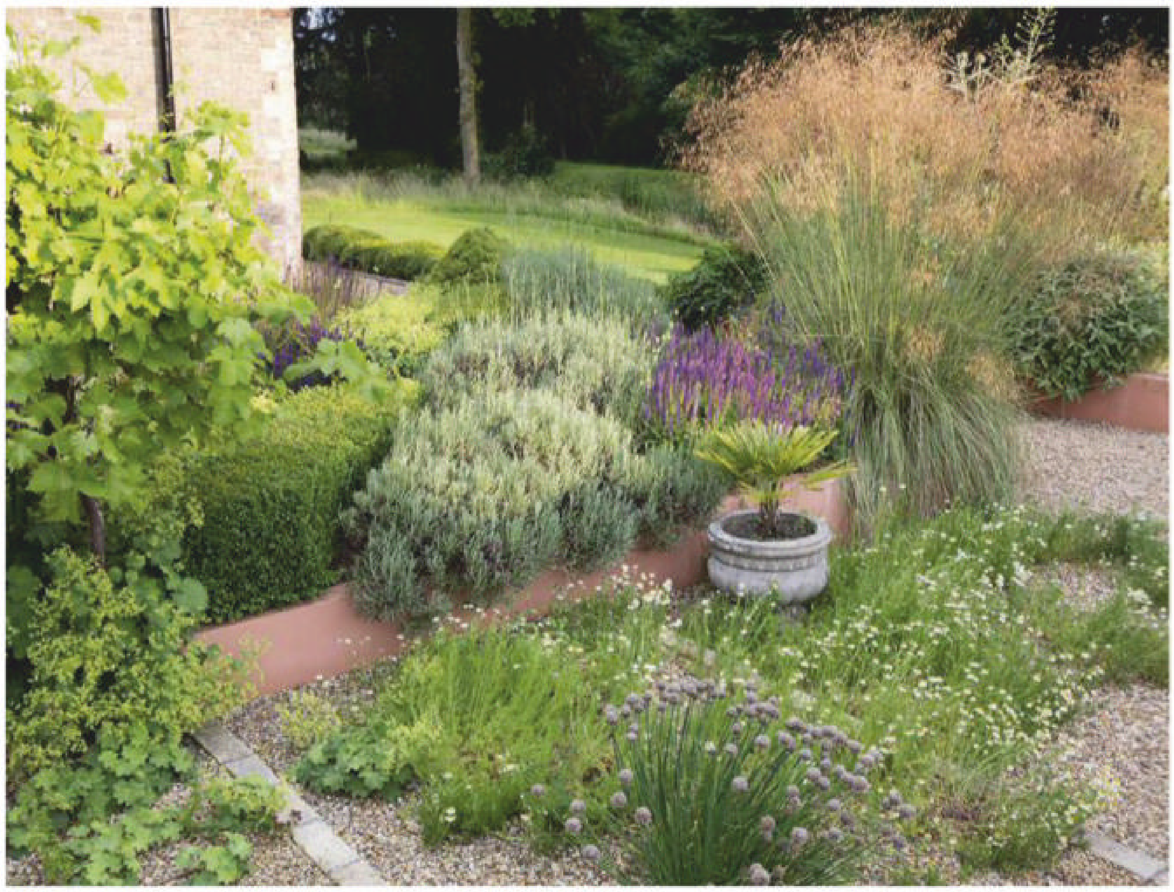


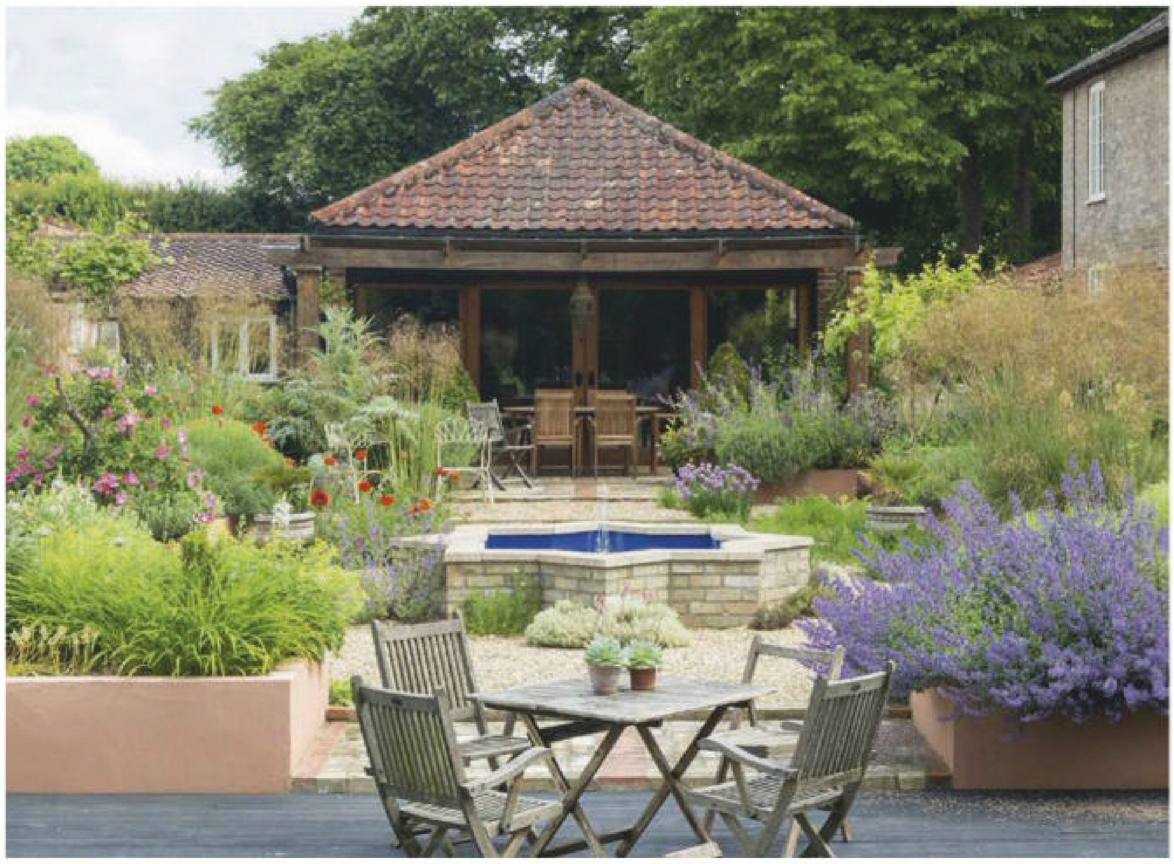
IN BRIEF

Name The Old Rectory.
What Rural garden with stream and meadows, and enclosed Islamic-style courtyard garden.
Where Norfolk.
Soil Boulder clay.
Size Two acres with six acres of meadow.
Climate Typical of East Anglia, with moderate winters and low rainfall.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The geometric design of the Islamic-style garden was a nod to Adolfo's engineer father, who designed the central water feature, while the Mediterranean planting is an ode to his Canarian mother's Moorish origins.







When Adolfo Harrison was building his design practice just over a decade ago he found the perfect test bed for his ideas in Norfolk at home of his parents, David and Loretta Harrison. He began to plot how they could transform the undulating eight-acre landscape into a sustainable series of garden spaces. Together Adolfo and his father have not only created a serene, transportative space but a working partnership that continues apace. "We really talk about each aspect for a long, long time and there's still a lot of back and forth," says Adolfo. "It's very much a collaboration between the two of us."

To the west of the house is an enclosed area bordered on one side by a timber-clad garden room and, on the other, by a stream, the Flordon Broadwalk, that once served a local mill. It's here that Adolfo conceived an Islamic-inspired courtyard that nodded to his father's love of geometry and his mother's Moorish heritage (Loretta moved to Norfolk from the Canary Islands 45 years ago). When they began it was an overgrown area with grass, shrubs and self-seeded trees.

Today symmetrical raised beds, in a soft terracotta-coloured render, are arranged around a star-shaped water feature while paths were made with pavers (reclaimed from beneath the garden room's floor) and Norfolk pea shingle with shallow steps that gently lead down towards a deck by the stream. The soil here is mostly chalky boulder clay (part of the original house was built using clay dug out of what is now the pond) so raised beds were essential to ensure good drainage for the Mediterranean plants.

The strong symmetry of the beds is contrasted with diagonal planting of box and lavender and self-seeders, including *Alchemilla mollis*, chamomile and chives, that routinely break free from their beds. "We have to be a bit aggressive with ▷

To continue turn to page 68

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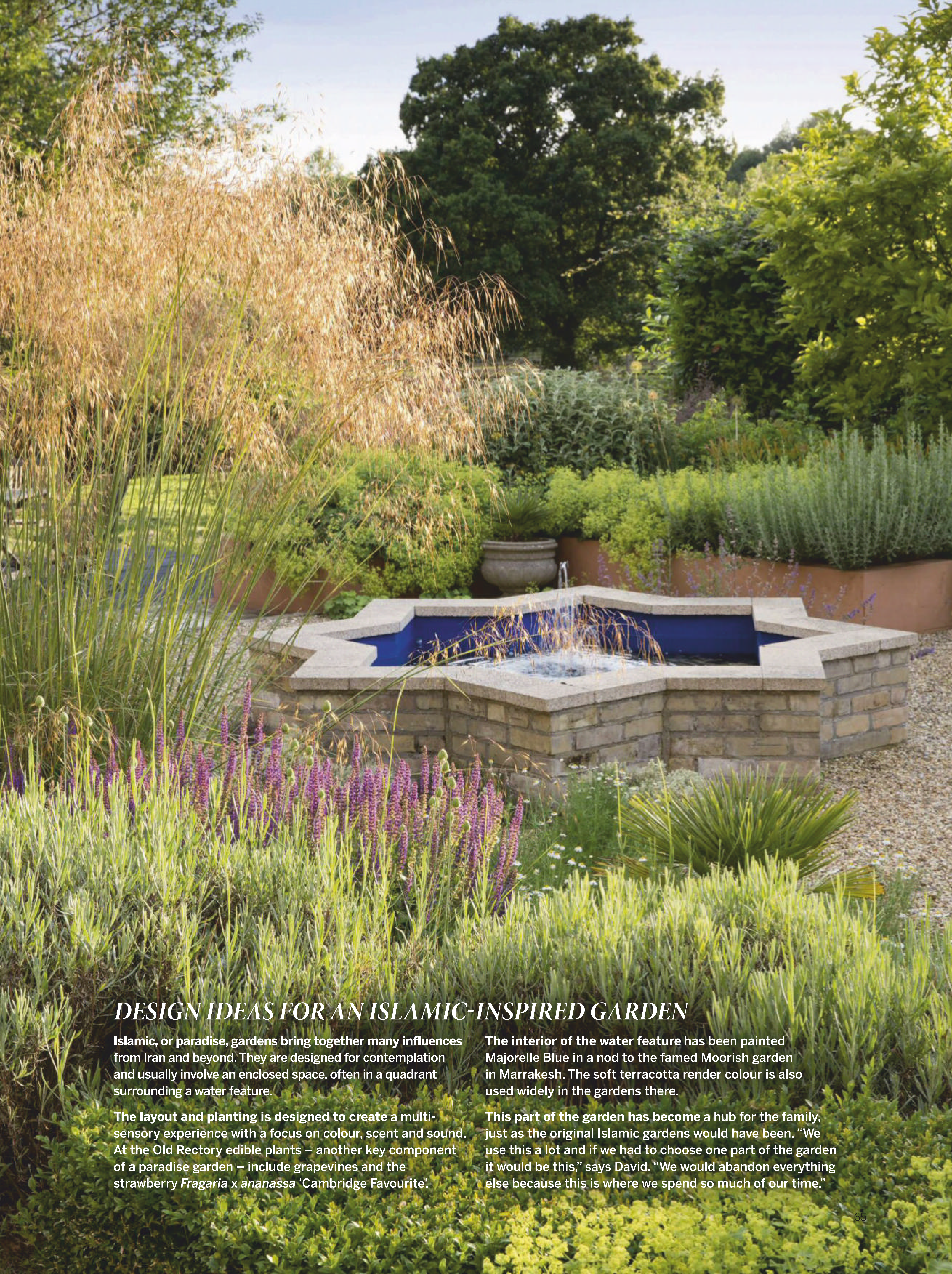
Raised beds of *Ornithogalum narbonense* and *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire separate the Islamic garden from the blackened deck. Surrounded by grasses including *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', it, looks out over the stream to woodland beyond.

Plants endemic to the Mediterranean, such as *Santolina pinnata* subsp. *neapolitana* and *Teucrium hircanicum* are grown in raised beds in the Islamic-style garden while self-seeding chamomile and chives growing among the Norfolk pea shingle.

The Islamic garden has become a favourite space to relax, with a sunny deck at one end and at the other a covered dining area attached to a garden room that once served as the village's parish room.



DESIGN IDEAS FOR AN ISLAMIC-INSPIRED GARDEN

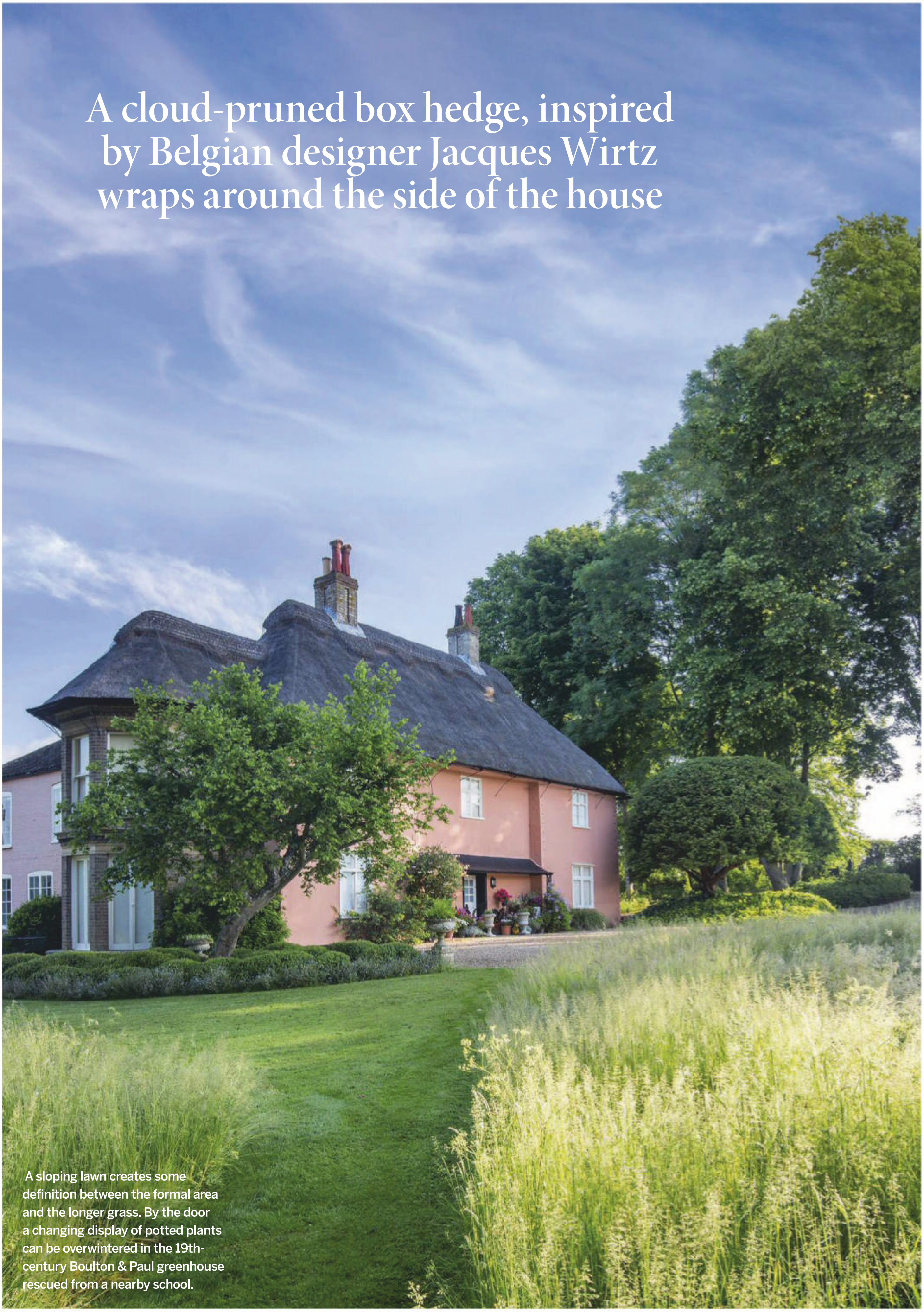
Islamic, or paradise, gardens bring together many influences from Iran and beyond. They are designed for contemplation and usually involve an enclosed space, often in a quadrant surrounding a water feature.

The layout and planting is designed to create a multi-sensory experience with a focus on colour, scent and sound. At the Old Rectory edible plants – another key component of a paradise garden – include grapevines and the strawberry *Fragaria* x *ananassa* 'Cambridge Favourite'.

The interior of the water feature has been painted Majorelle Blue in a nod to the famed Moorish garden in Marrakesh. The soft terracotta render colour is also used widely in the gardens there.

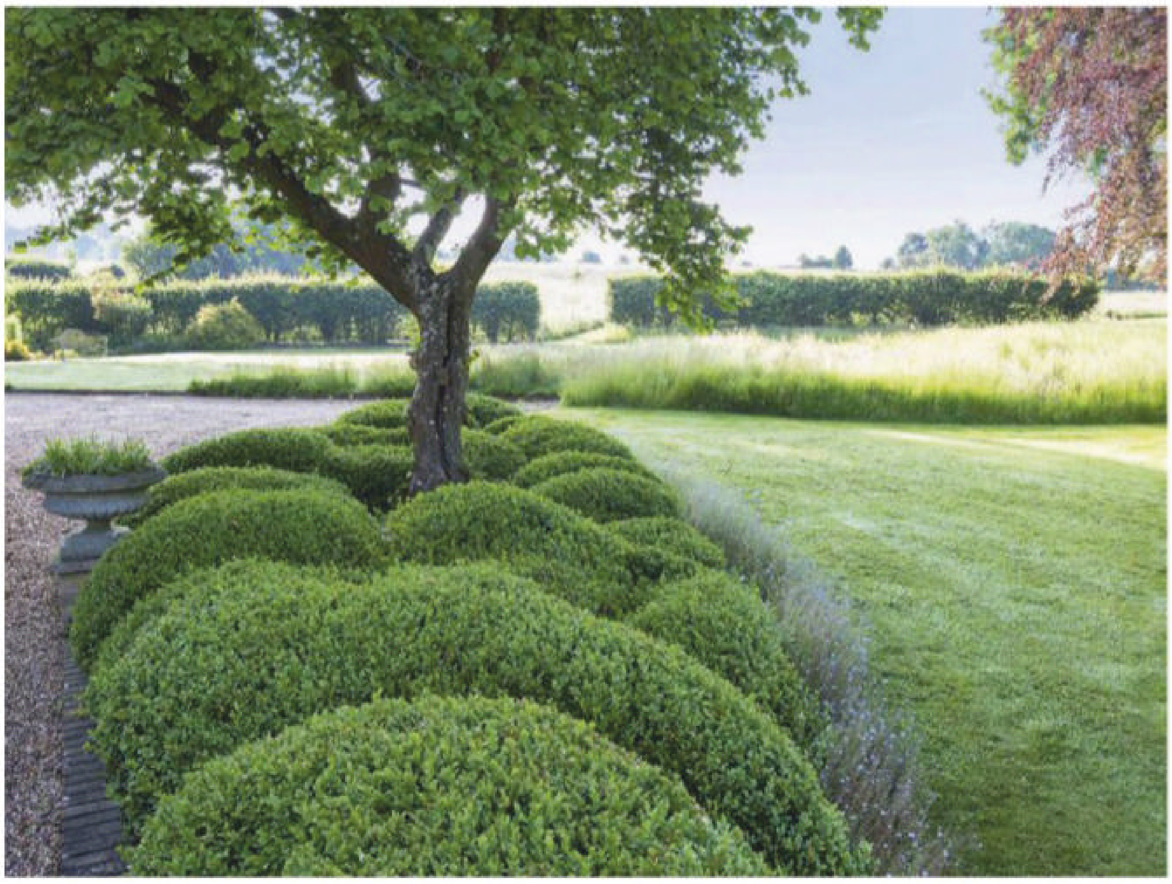
This part of the garden has become a hub for the family, just as the original Islamic gardens would have been. "We use this a lot and if we had to choose one part of the garden it would be this," says David. "We would abandon everything else because this is where we spend so much of our time."

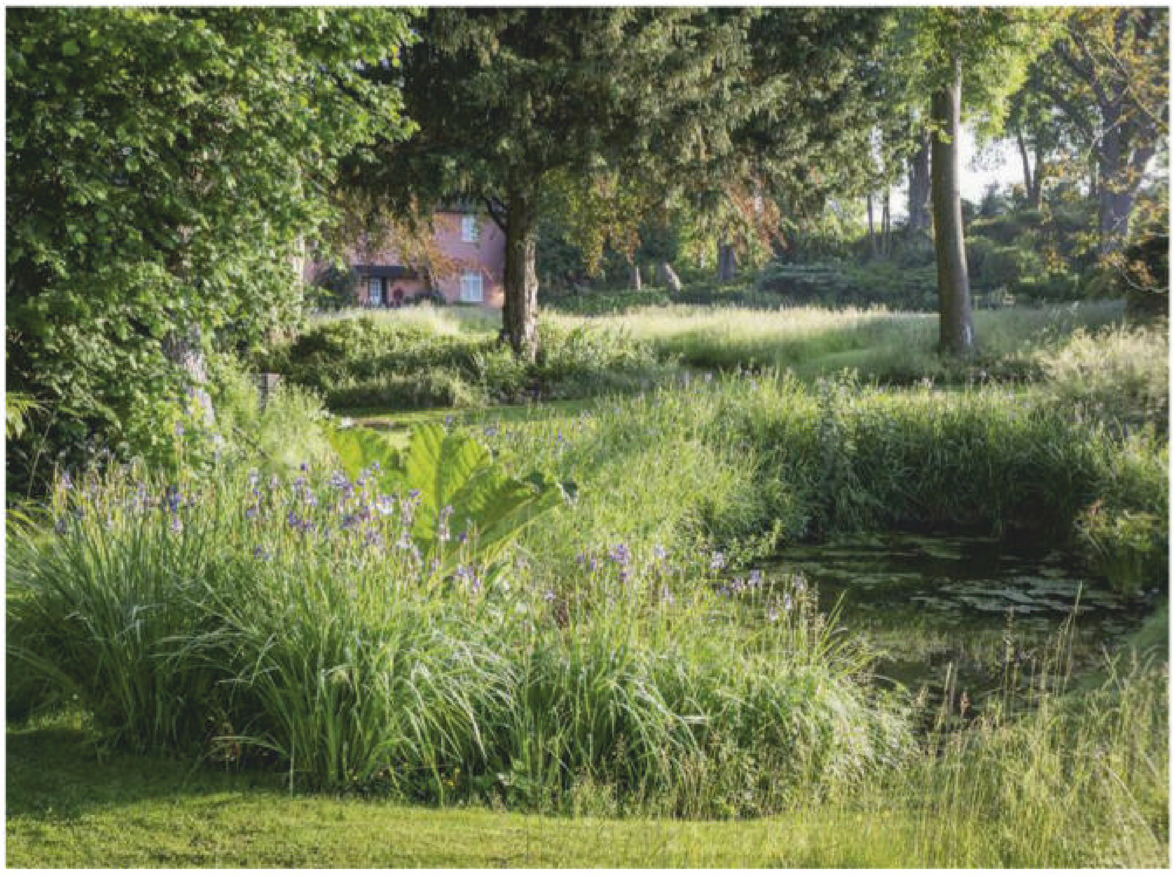
An enormous apple tree, which David estimates is around a century old, sits in the middle of the wildflower meadow, which in summer is dominated by oxeye daisies.



A cloud-pruned box hedge, inspired by Belgian designer Jacques Wirtz wraps around the side of the house

A sloping lawn creates some definition between the formal area and the longer grass. By the door a changing display of potted plants can be overwintered in the 19th-century Boulton & Paul greenhouse rescued from a nearby school.





▷ weeding or they would take over," says David. Perennials are cut back in early spring with an occasional chop in May for more vigorous plants including nepeta.

Intense colour comes from the spikes of *Salvia* x *sylvestris* 'Mainacht' and *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire' contrasted with the yellows of *Phlomis fruticosa* and *Santolina pinnata* subsp. *neapolitana*. Artichokes, *Ferula communis* and *Stipa gigantea*, as well as a standard grapevine, all provide height and increase the sense of enclosure. "What's amazed me is how practical this planting is," says David. "We never have to water, even through last summer's drought. But the frosts don't touch the plants either."

One of the key considerations in all of the plans is the maintenance. "We've really based it around what my father can do with a mower and hedge trimmer but those broad brush strokes work very well in this landscape," says Adolfo. David has help in the garden for about half a day a week but does the lion's share of the work, including pruning the imposing cloud-pruned box hedge that wraps around the side of the house from the Islamic-style garden towards the meadows. It was planted with young bareroot plants at the same time as work began on the Islamic-style garden, and provides an impressive feature. To maintain the shape he uses a small, rechargeable trimmer and mows the meadow's wide paths himself and then has the whole field topped during the autumn.

The house and garden are never entirely finished and the next major project is to tackle the huge sweeping banks that border the drive into the property. The site has recently been cleared and will be replanted with rivers of perennials in six different but complementary zones. "We will be stewards rather than having to garden it intensively. At least that's the idea," says Adolfo. "All my mother and sister want to know is why I'm making more work for dad. But for him it's not work, he loves being in the garden." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Adolfo's work at **adolfoharrison.com**

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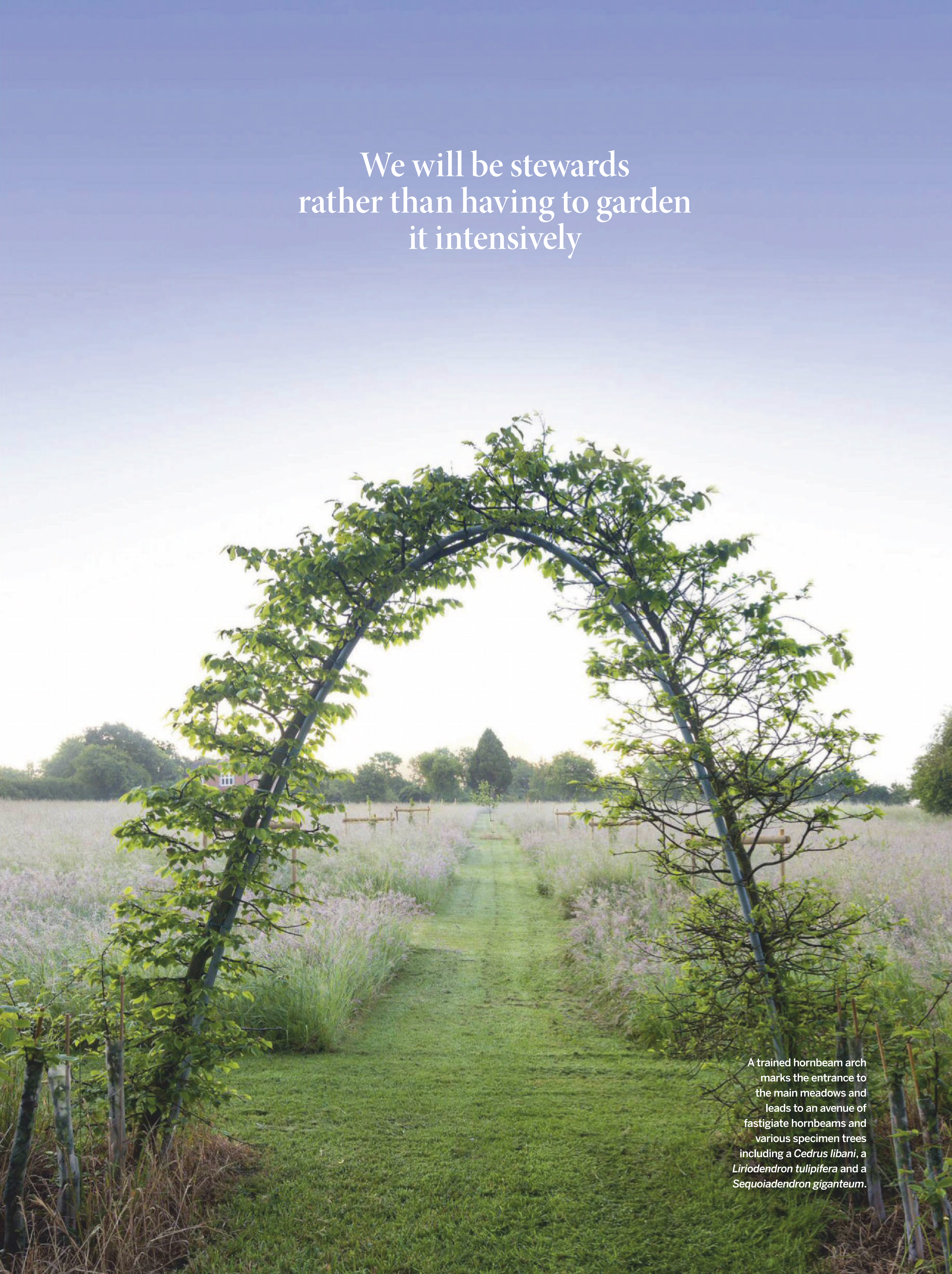
A cloud-pruned box hedge, inspired by the late Belgian designer Jacques Wirtz, surrounds a *Corylus avellana* tree. David maintains the shape of the hedge with a small, rechargeable trimmer. "It's very satisfying," he says, "like shearing a sheep."

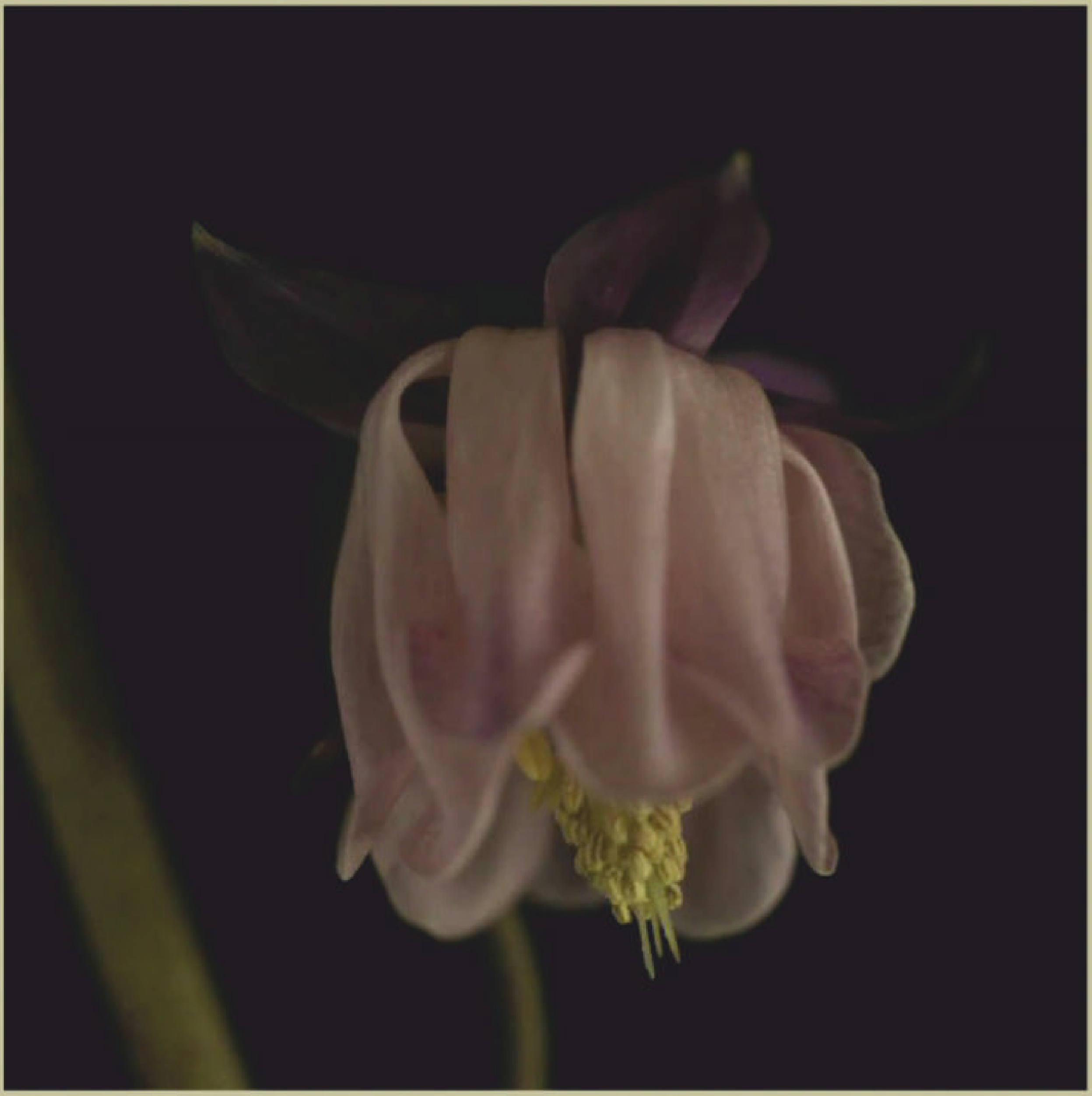
Close to the house a small pond provides a space for experimenting with a selection of plants that prefer shady damp areas. In summer the pond is edged with *Iris sibirica* followed by *Thalia dealbata,* gunnera and lilies.

Mown paths through the meadow encourage visitors to explore the outer reaches of the garden. Benches have been placed around several different trees throughout the meadow so you can sit and enjoy a variety of views throughout the day.



We will be stewards rather than having to garden it intensively

A trained hornbeam arch marks the entrance to the main meadows and leads to an avenue of fastigiate hornbeams and various specimen trees including a *Cedrus libani*, a *Liriodendron tulipifera* and a *Sequoiadendron giganteum*.



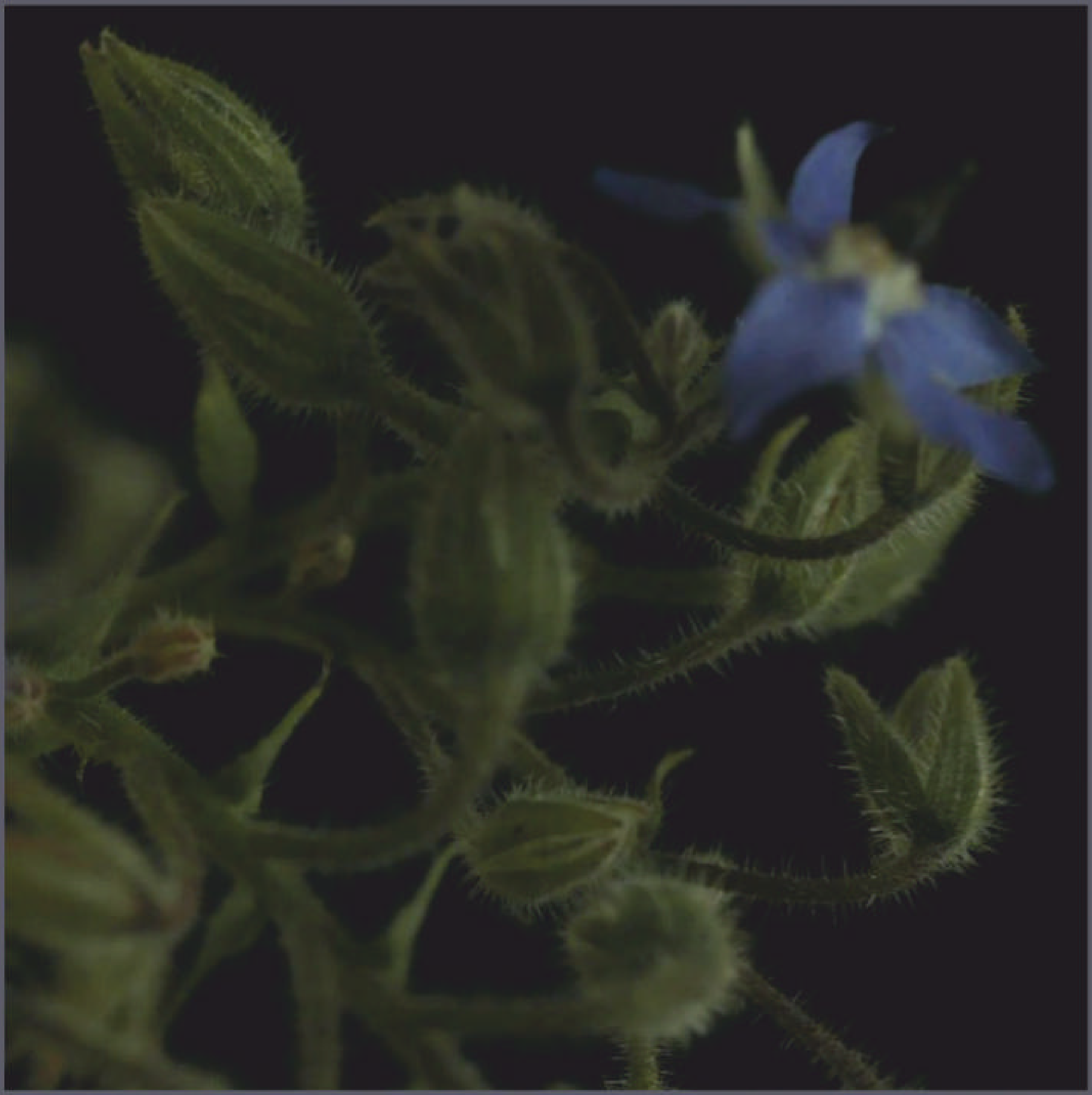
Aquilegia

FLOWERING IN THE TWILIGHT

Fine-art photographer Fleur Olby swapped white, studio backgrounds for deep, velvet-black when photographing her favourite plants. The result is a body of work that is moody, dramatic, and reminiscent of Victorian pressed flowers and auricula theatres

WORDS **ROSANNA MORRIS** PHOTOGRAPHS **FLEUR OLBY**

ALL IMAGES © FLEUR OLBY FROM *VELVET BLACK*



Borago

There is something intangibly ghostlike about the aquilegia and the auricula; meanwhile, the *Dactylis glomerata* (orchard grass) cutting is almost unrecognisable as its spikelets glow a luminescent green and its ethereal anthers cling on as if by magic. And the *Borago officinalis* is nothing short of otherworldly, its soft, unfurling bristly buds rendered in microscopic detail.

The plants photographed by Fleur Olby for her series *Velvet Black* have taken on a new persona. Her treatment of them has cast them in a whole new light and yet their appearance is the result of a virtual absence of light. In a complete change of approach to the work that most defined her – bright, graphic and close-up plant portraits shot in a studio that were commissioned to illustrate Monty Don's column in *The Observer* from 1995 to 2002 – Fleur photographs these individual plants against a black, velvet backdrop as day fades into night. "I really wanted to look at black and what could come out of black," she says.

Fleur grew up in Yorkshire surrounded by nature. She began to take photographs while studying for an MA in graphic design at Central Saint Martins and progressed to still-life imagery of food and flowers as well as environmental portraits of plants. The work made in her commercial studio in London for 16 years appeared in magazines, editorial and advertising, ▷

Helleborus

▷ and she became known for her zoomed-in, microscopic look. Eventually, however, she came to a point where she wanted to make her own work again. It led to *Velvet Black*.

"I wanted to find a new palette and to look at the frequency and vibration of light and how you get colours from something much more solid," she says. The black, velvet fabric she started shooting against in low, natural light not only produces sublime imagery, but also takes its cues from traditional still-life photography, from auricula theatres and Victorian flower shows.

Velvet Black is also a story about a garden. Most of the plants featured are from Fleur's garden in the Yorkshire Dales, which she started cultivating ten years ago. "My work is about slowing down the viewing process and finding the quiet and what comes out of the quiet. You see that in a garden," she says. "The aquilegia was one of the first plants I bought for the garden – it has grown really well. I had quite a big collection of hellebores that I brought up from London. They didn't like it up here, but two survived. I love auriculas, and sweet iris is another one I collect. The thalictrum is one I bought from Beth Chatto's garden, and it thrives here."

The series of images that form *Velvet Black* are part of a long-term body of work, *Colour from Black*, in which Fleur explors ideas of nature's quiet, beauty, and place through a childhood

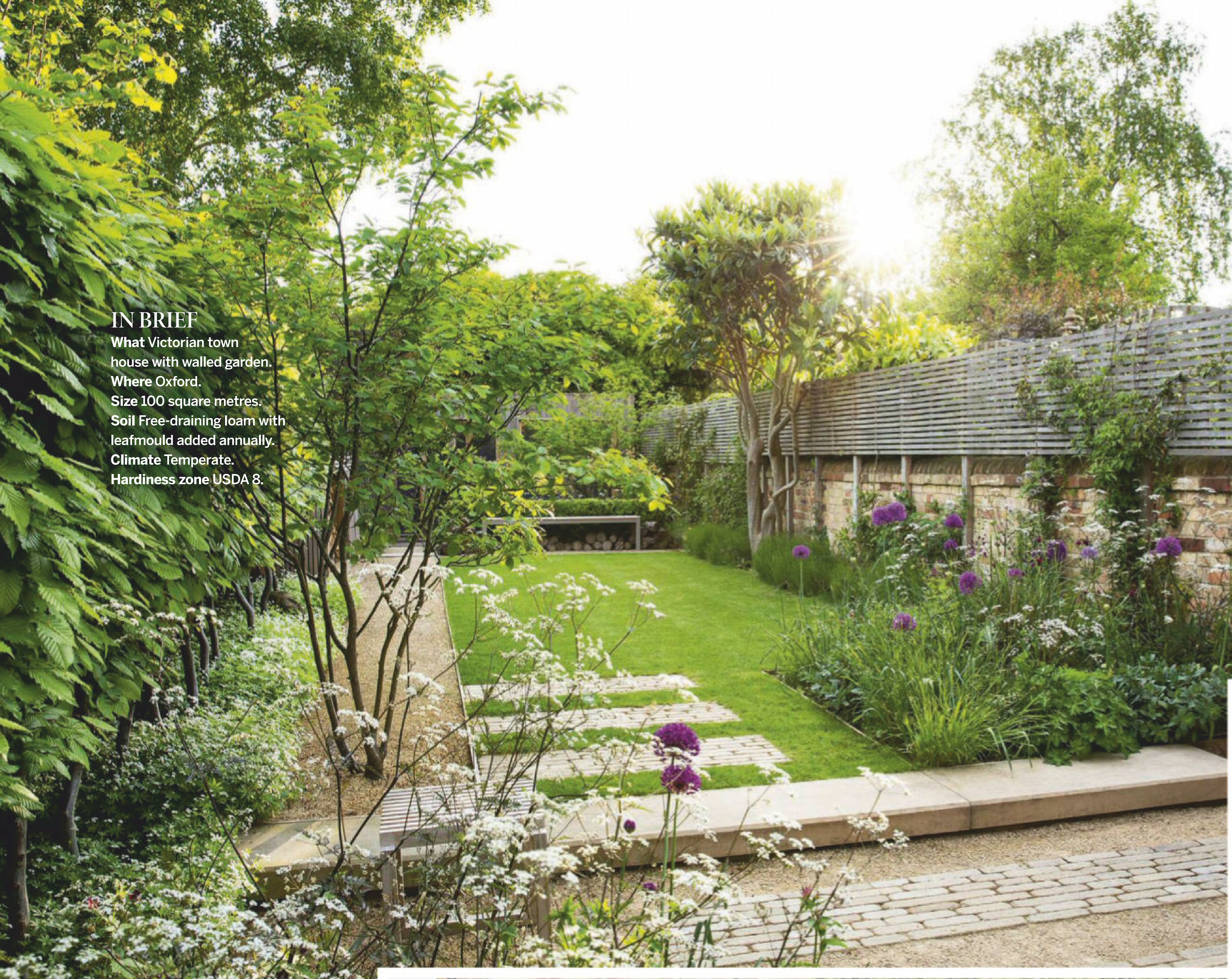
Thalictrum

landscape. Fleur has been working on *Colour from Black* for eight years, but *Velvet Black* is the first part of the series she has published, both as a four-colour litho book, and a limited-edition of five handmade books, a copy of which is now in the National Art Library collection of artists' books at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Turning over the pages of one of the handmade volumes is reminiscent of looking through a book of flower-pressings or a rare botanical book. Fleur handles each image as if attached to the paper is a rare and fragile specimen she has collected and pressed to cherish, her forefinger lingering on the brilliant-blue borage. "These are really precious to me," she says. "I feel I'm preserving something quite special." □

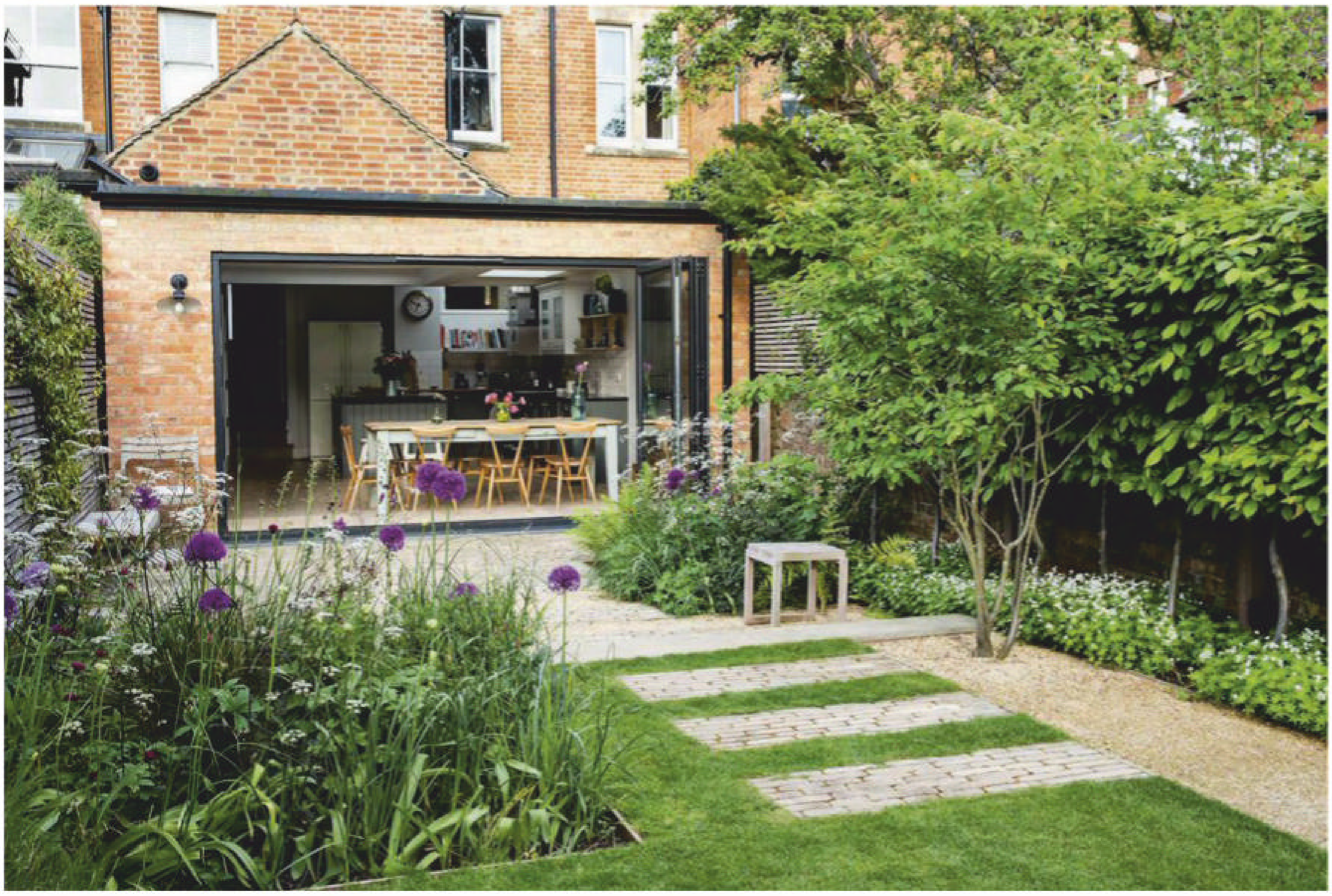
USEFUL INFORMATION

Images from *Velvet Black* form part of the *…on making* exhibition of eight British photographers at The Photographic Gallery, the National Museum of Gdansk in Poland until 2 June. The litho edition of *Velvet Black* is available from the Photographers' Gallery in London, Impressions Gallery in Bradford and from **fleurolby.com**



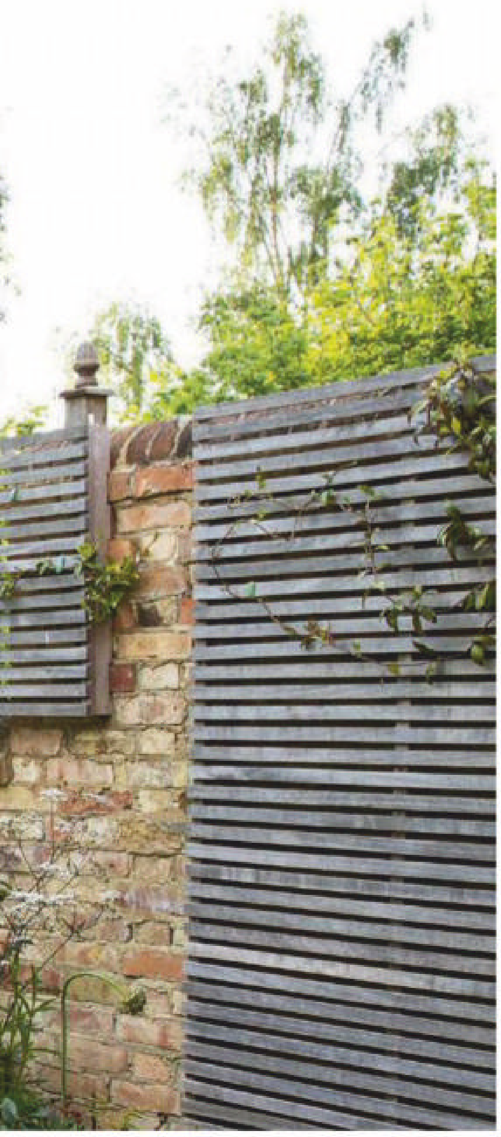
IN BRIEF

What Victorian town house with walled garden.
Where Oxford.
Size 100 square metres.
Soil Free-draining loam with leafmould added annually.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.



Above Designer Angus Thompson avoided the long garden feeling like a runway through zoning. The step up to the lawn provides a transition, while the offset areas of planting provide a veil allowing glimpses of the rest of the garden.

Right Angus chose materials sympathetic to the Victorian house with honey-coloured York stone, used both in cut form and as tumbled setts. These give a contemporary appeal but will also age nicely to add to the patina of the garden.



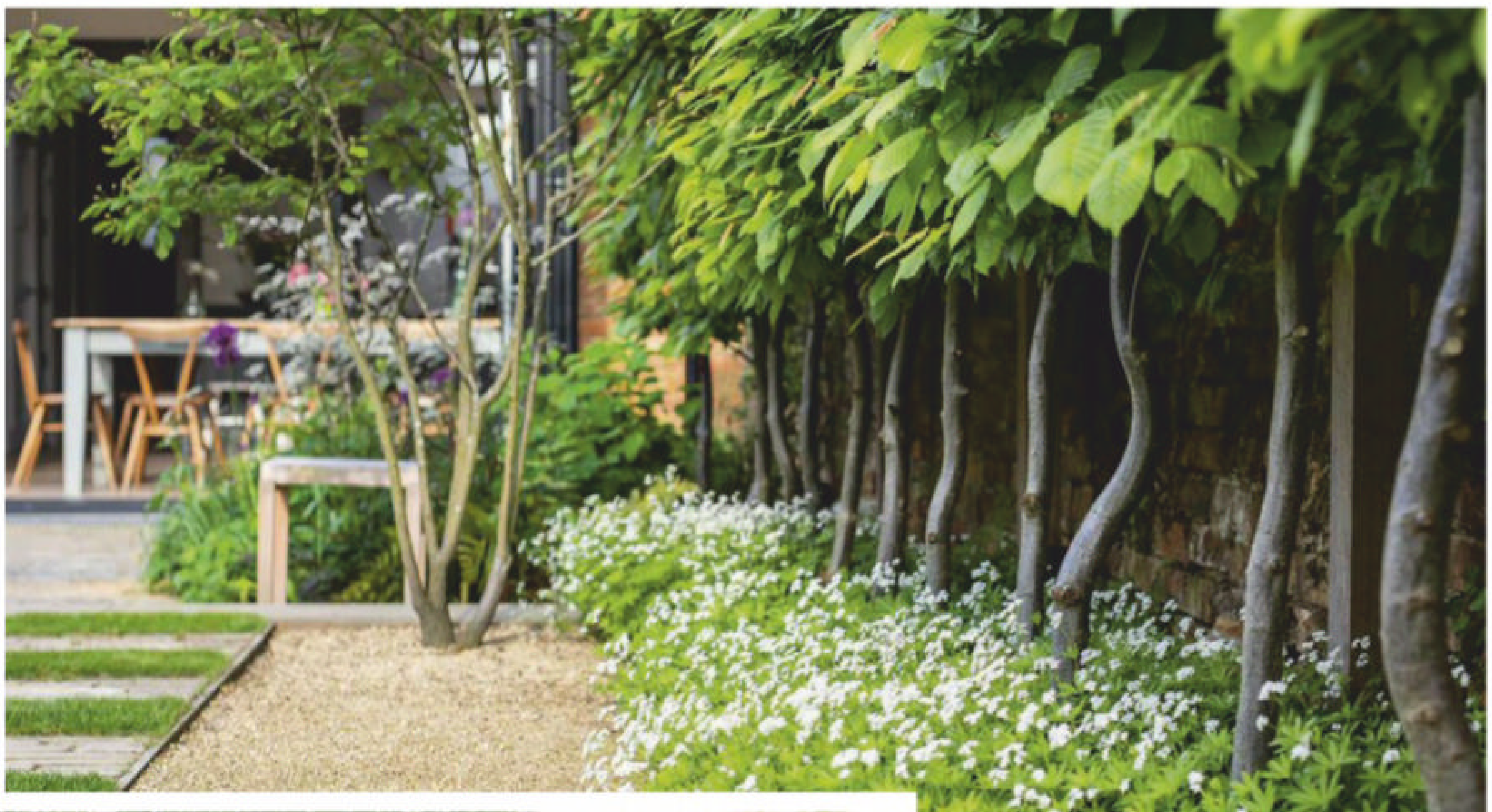
Above Owner Eve Chase loves the fresh spring appeal of a hedgerow. To achieve that here in the garden, signature plants include *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing', with its frothy white flowers and dark-purple stems, and the fern *Dryopteris erythrosora*.

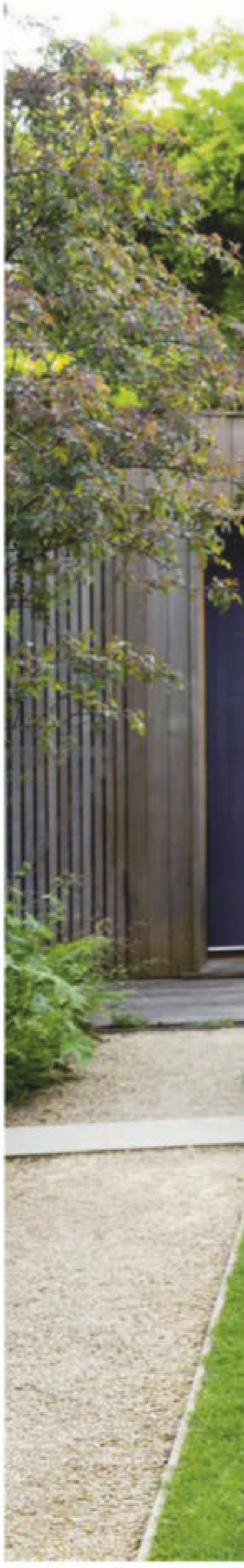
Left A naturalised mix of planting with *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation' providing the colour theme, picked up by *Verbascum phoeniceum* 'Violetta' and *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum'. The scheme is bound together by the grass *Melica altissima* and more anthriscus.

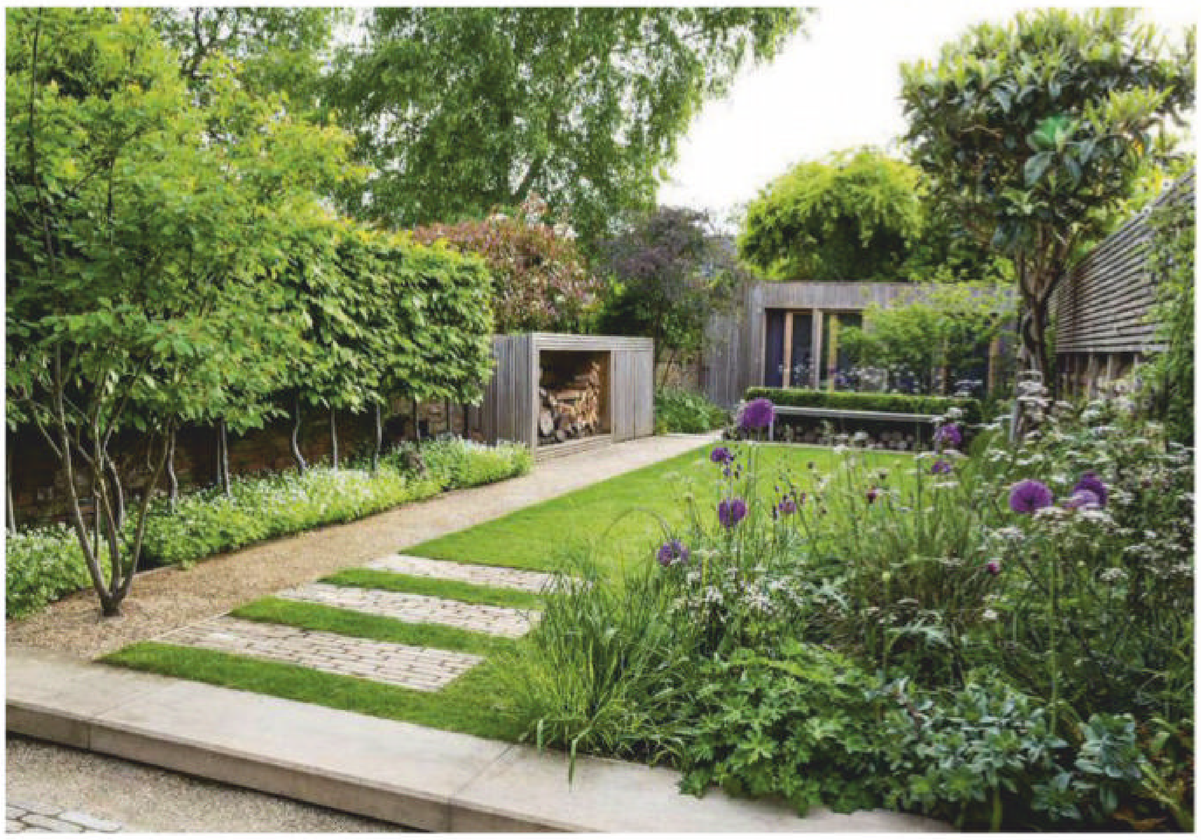
Sense of space

Adding character to a small garden is all about careful structure and considered planting – with elements of surprise and intrigue along the way

WORDS **SORREL EVERTON** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**



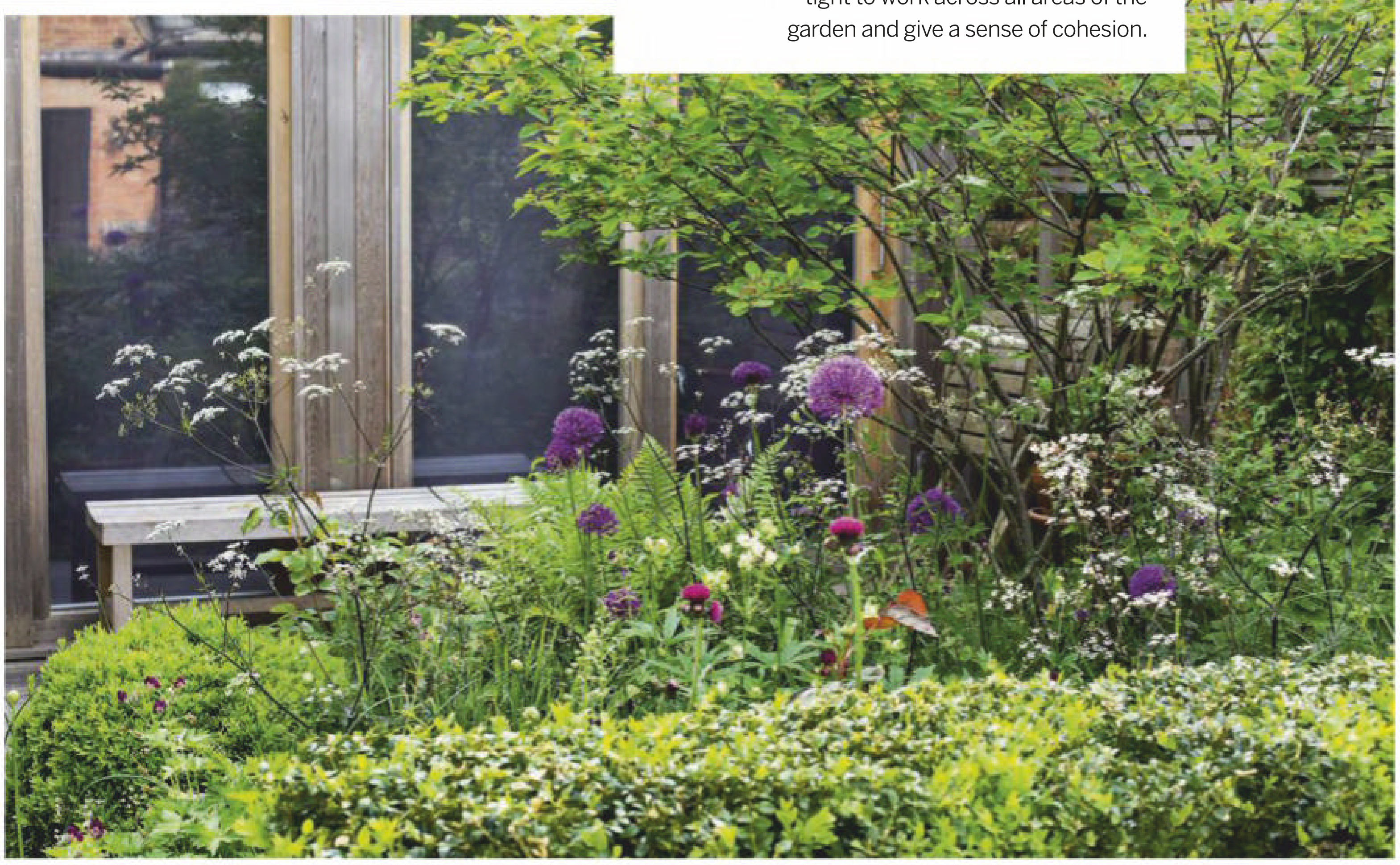


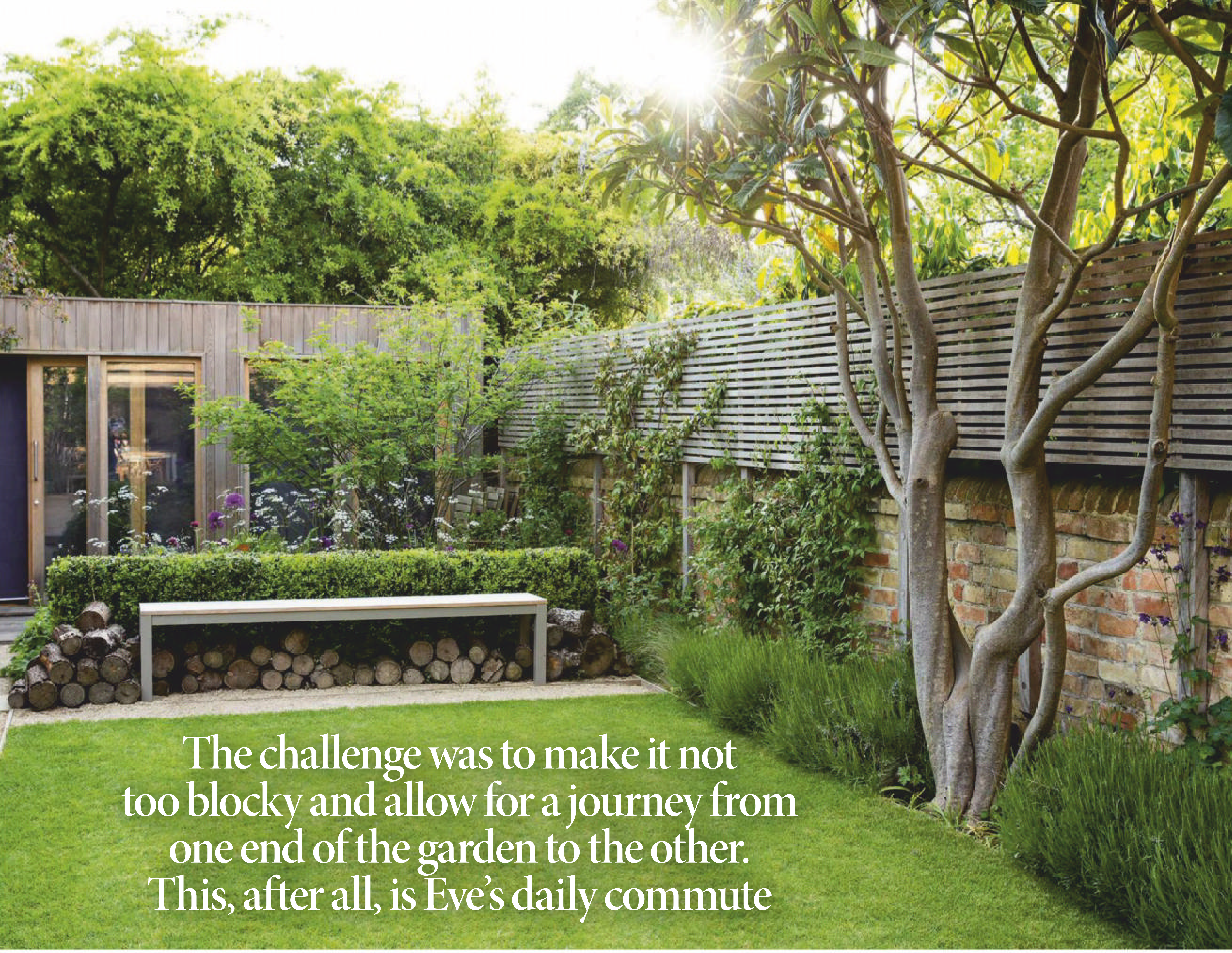


Above The groundcover *Galium odoratum* with its white, star-like flowers thrives here on the shadier side of the garden, and is used as underplanting for the pleached hornbeam hedge.

Left Angus placed a multi-stem *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii* in the pathway that runs from the house to the studio. This provides both a visual and physical full stop, avoiding that runway feel and allowing for a more varied journey from one area to the next.

Below A further area of planting at the back of the garden, including a second amelanchier, brings the garden right up to Eve's writing studio. The planting palette was kept deliberately tight to work across all areas of the garden and give a sense of cohesion.





The challenge was to make it not too blocky and allow for a journey from one end of the garden to the other. This, after all, is Eve's daily commute

The smaller a garden space, the harder it has to work, particularly where that space needs to cater for three children, a dog and include two work studios – while also providing a sense of intimacy and connection with nature and the opportunity to indulge in a love of plants.

Eve Chase and family moved to this Oxford house six years ago. Having put an airy extension on the back of the house, opening it up to the garden – and a studio space at the bottom of the garden divided in two for both Eve and husband Ben – the challenge was to transform a traditional, oblong, suburban plot, complete with an air raid shelter and a lot of rubble, into a garden that would work for everyone.

Local garden designer Angus Thompson took on the challenge. Eve was aware of his award-winning 2009 RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden Nature Ascending, designed in collaboration with Jane Brockbank, and liked the combination of considered structure with exuberant, frothy planting. "I'm interested first and foremost in space," explains Angus. "And how you can feel affected by the space you are in." The challenge here was to make it not too blocky and allow for a journey from one end of the garden to the other. This, after all, is Eve's daily commute.

"I've included one level change from terrace to lawn and back down to the studios to suggest zoning and a sense of change. It's quite a crisp geometric layout with the planting as a counterpoint that can act as a veil from one section to the next." Angus has also played with the boundaries – on one side it has been left open to borrow the sight of trees beyond, on the other it is more enclosed. The planting is fulsome – thanks to Eve's love of woodland and hedgerow schemes but kept consistent so no one area of the garden jars visually. "It's a really intimate garden," says Eve. "My daughter loves climbing the loquat tree and my sons like lying on the bench. And I'm constantly tweaking. It's a garden to be in together as a family and we all have aspects that we enjoy."

Eve is a novelist and her latest book, out next spring, centres around a Cotswold manor house and its garden, with location playing as key a role as do the characters. As Eve sits in her writing studio looking out on to her garden, it's not difficult to appreciate just how influential a sense of place is to the unfolding of our daily lives. □

Above The loquat tree *Eriobotrya japonica* was retained from the original garden. Angus admits that you wouldn't sensibly plant it there but it was kept for its quirky shape and tree-climbing appeal. "You don't need to see the designer's hand in everything," says Angus. It is underplanted with lavender, enjoying the sunnier side of the garden.

USEFUL INFORMATION For more information on Angus's work visit **angusthompsondesign.co.uk**

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

SARAH EBERLE

The multi award-wining designer on taking risks and thinking outside the box, her love of rugged landscapes and why she's never felt happier with her choice of career

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

In the world of garden design, Sarah Eberle has become a trailblazer for women starting out on their careers. Last year, she pulled off the near-impossible feat of designing four spaces at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show: a walk-through garden for Hillier in the Great Pavilion; an India- and cricket-inspired Artisan Garden; a trade stand; and a Royal wedding installation. For most designers, creating and overseeing just one show garden is nerve-racking enough. But for Sarah, a self-confessed high-energy person, running a project on a very short turnaround is an indulgence. "For really good creativity," she explains, "you need to maintain that energy in a project and it's difficult when it's maybe over two or three years."

What drives her is a need to be challenged. For someone who says she is easily bored, it's surprising to discover that she's stuck with landscape design for more than 40 years. In retrospect it was an ideal career choice. "As a designer your job is to be challenged, to find solutions, and if you never make mistakes you never learn. I'm not frightened of making mistakes, of taking risks."

Sarah grew up in Dartmouth in Devon, and attributes her ability to think outside the box to her father, an "incredibly free-thinking man". She admits she had little interest in the large family garden where everything took too long, but was drawn, instead, to the nearby countryside and was particularly fascinated (and still is) by the effect of light on the landscape. At the progressive school Dartington Hall she was taught to question authority, and learned that the most important word in the English language is 'why'. She realised that landscapes don't just happen, and asked her careers advisor if there was a job she could do that would allow her to shape the land. Landscape architect was the answer, and so Sarah moved up to London to study. Once qualified, she returned to Devon and joined a practice part time, working in a garden centre the rest of the week to be around plants. Later she set up her own design and build company with Robin Taylor. She moved again and joined Hillier Nurseries where she eventually became design director. Today she works with a group of architects, designing landscapes from the inception of the building projects, and takes on a number of private gardens that are local to her. These tend to be for people who are moving out of London. "I take them through the commitment of what they're doing and make sure they have a beautiful landscape garden that requires minimal maintenance."

She looks to landscapes and architecture, rather than gardens, for ideas and often finds herself visiting scrap yards and quarries because both hold so much potential for creating something new. "I love brutal landscapes, such as deserts and volcanic areas, where nature shows such strength and personality."

> I LOVE BRUTAL LANDSCAPES, SUCH AS DESERTS AND VOLCANIC AREAS, WHERE NATURE SHOWS SUCH STRENGTH AND PERSONALITY

Two of her Chelsea show gardens – her 2006 gold-medal winning garden, Walking Barefoot with Bradstone, and the ground-breaking 2007 Mars garden, which featured rammed earth walls and was awarded Best in Show – were inspired by these kinds of landscape. She was particularly delighted with the Mars garden, which was the culmination of eight years of research into the psychological effects of long-term stays in space. "It summarised everything I like to do, which is to be creative, to think outside the box, and to ensure it has a really strong, intelligent story."

Does Sarah recognises that her remarkable Chelsea track record makes her a role model for aspiring women designers, who have for many years been under represented on Chelsea's Main Avenue? "I consider myself genderless," she says. "I'm just a landscape designer and I do what I do." But she does suggest that for women it can be more difficult to take on a show garden, especially if they have family commitments. "No matter how much women work, they still do most of the homemaking, and it can be very difficult for them to disappear off the scene for several weeks."

She lectures widely and enjoys firing the passion for a career she enjoys more now than ever. "Garden Design is now much more recognised as a career. Major players at Chelsea are minor celebrities now. It has changed enormously, but you can always learn more."

Surprisingly, Sarah does not have a garden of her own. "I would either become so passionate about it that I wouldn't get any work done, or I would want to change it all the time because I have a new idea." For now, the view across farmland to an ancient forest known as Caesar's Belt sustains and inspires her. But the rugged Mediterranean landscape of Sicily, a place Sarah has come to know well through her role as *madrina* (godmother) of Radicepura Garden Festival, is where she can see herself finally creating her own garden and indulging her love of succulents and cacti. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

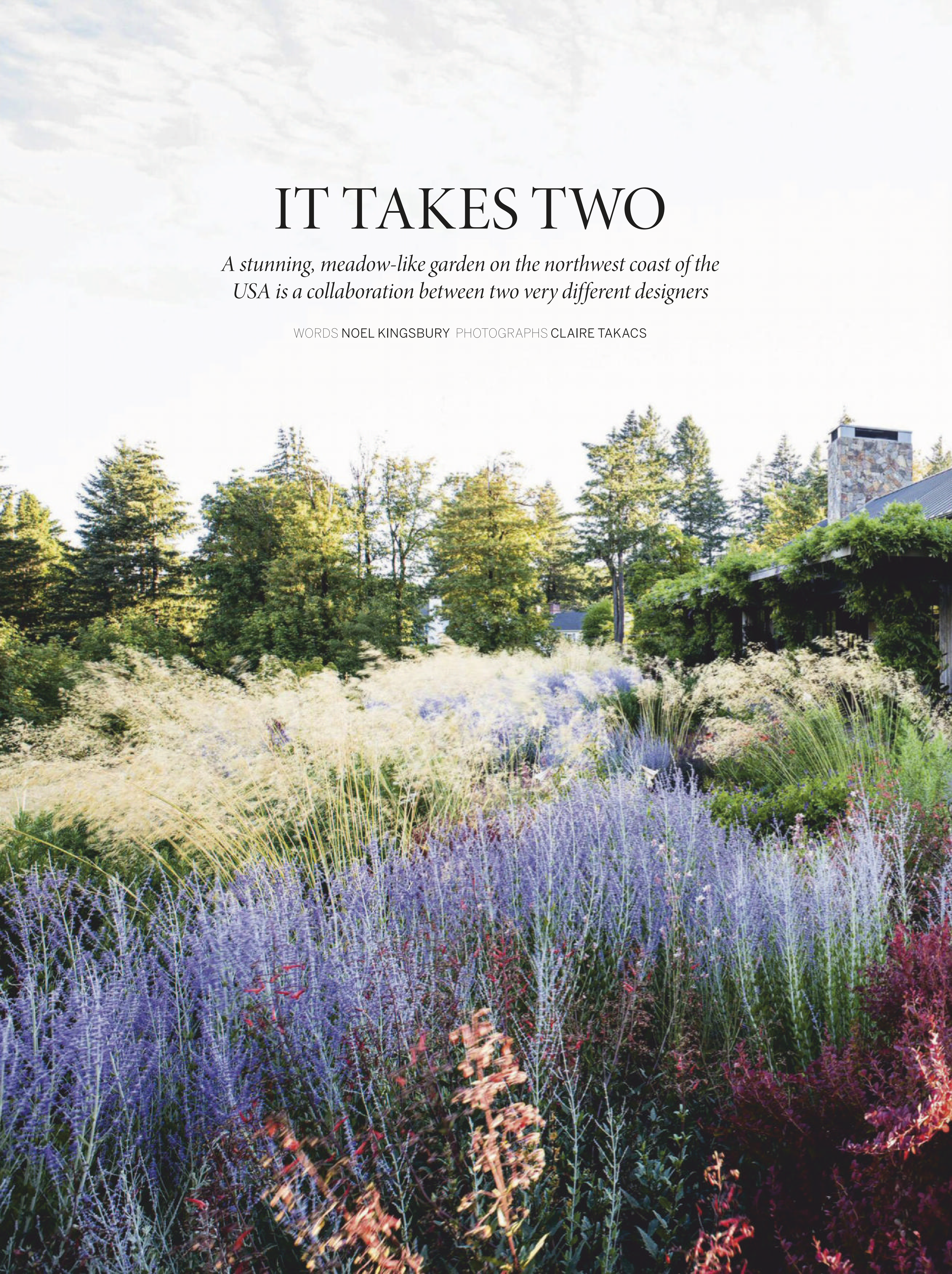
Sarah Eberle Landscape Design, Longbarrow House, Cole Henley,
Whitchurch, Hampshire RG28 7Q.
Tel 01256 895754, saraheberle.com

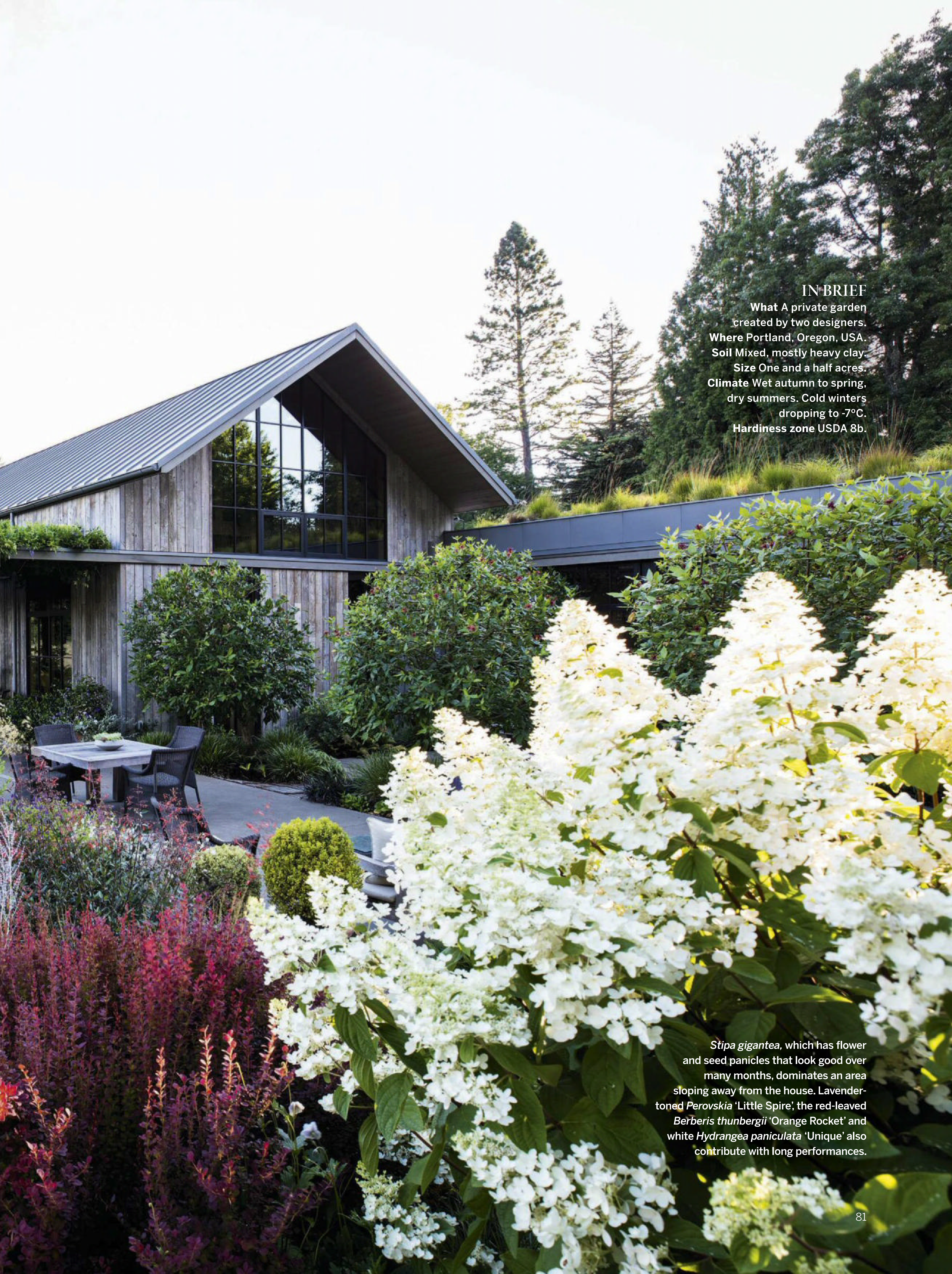
- This year's Radicepura Garden Festival runs until 27 October. Sarah is leading a four-day workshop (18-22 June) at the festival on designing a garden for a luxury hotel. radicepurafestival.com/en

IT TAKES TWO

A stunning, meadow-like garden on the northwest coast of the USA is a collaboration between two very different designers

WORDS **NOEL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**





IN BRIEF

What A private garden created by two designers.
Where Portland, Oregon, USA.
Soil Mixed, mostly heavy clay.
Size One and a half acres.
Climate Wet autumn to spring, dry summers. Cold winters dropping to -7°C.
Hardiness zone USDA 8b.

Stipa gigantea, which has flower and seed panicles that look good over many months, dominates an area sloping away from the house. Lavender-toned *Perovskia* 'Little Spire', the red-leaved *Berberis thunbergii* 'Orange Rocket' and white *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Unique' also contribute with long performances.

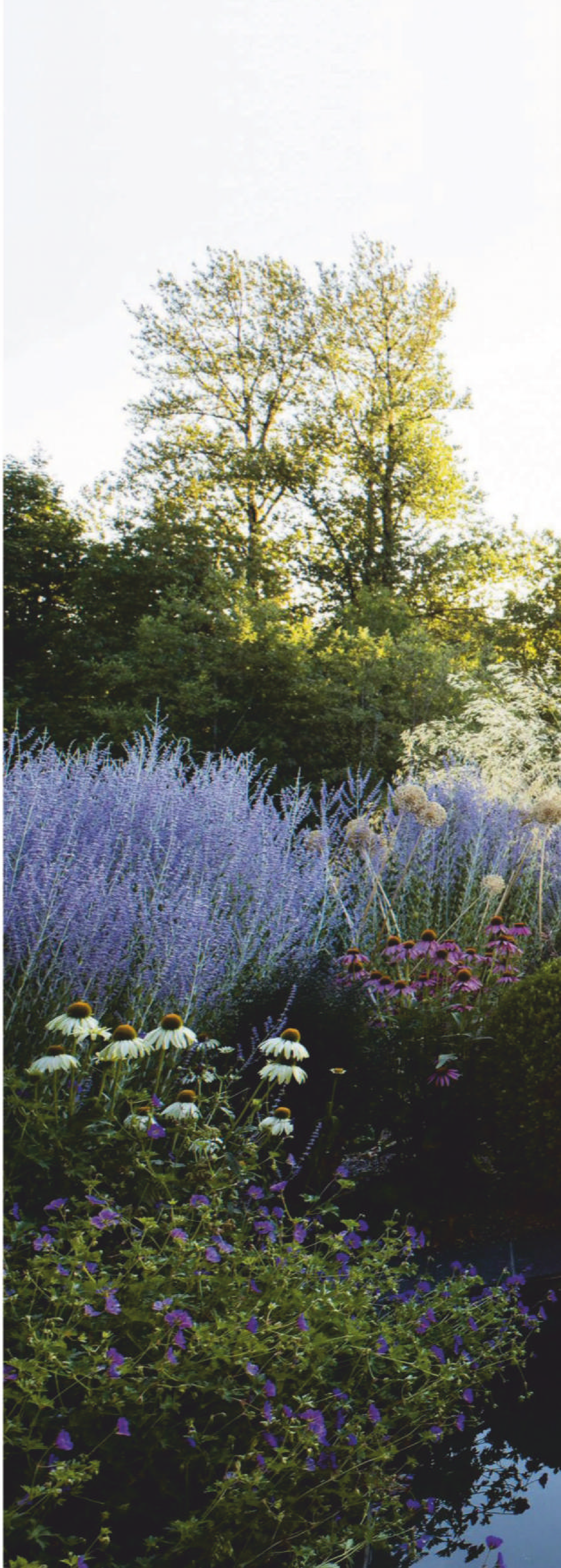
Garden design collaborations seem relatively rare, but a recent one in Portland, Oregon, brought together two plantspeople: Daniel J Hinkley and Lucy Hardiman. Dan is known primarily as a plant hunter, whose work in botanical exploration and plant introduction is globally second to none, while Lucy is a designer and a lifelong advocate for expert planting design. Although the two had known each other for 25 years, they had never before worked together on a garden. Dan had been asked to design this particular garden by the architect, Jim Olson and Lucy had local knowledge of the climate. The two worked on the planting plans together but it was Lucy who took care of logistics and ordered all the plants.

The clients were a couple who had been lifelong gardeners and active in the Portland Garden Society. "They love plants and they like tidy shapes, such as boxwoods," says Lucy. Getting Dan and Lucy involved opened up many possibilities, given the range of plants that flourish in the region's climate. The site presented various challenges, starting with the gradient. "They had a field sloping away from the house," says Dan. "We initially talked about a ha-ha, but ended up going for a retaining wall that serves the same function." The wall supports a grass-themed border, inspired by the planting ideas of the Dutch designer Piet Oudolf, which sits behind a reflecting pool near the house. This is the only part of the garden where flower colour was important, otherwise as Dan says: "It was completely about texture."

The border is a good example of how to create a stylised meadow effect, with enough grasses for the onlooker to read it as 'meadow', but not so many that they dilute the impact of the perennials. *Stipa gigantea*, which is used here, is a very useful grass for achieving this as it fills a large volume with its elegant, oat-like flowers and seedheads from a relatively small, non-spreading basal clump of evergreen foliage. Normally this grass is used sparingly. Here it is used in much larger quantities to create great billowing clouds that float over the perennials to dramatic effect. *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' is also used and repeated in a strip on the roof of the house. This cultivar gives a lot of visual impact for a small amount of ground area, and has a very long season of looking good, from June through to February. Among the perennials used here, *Echinacea purpurea* cultivars are prominent over many summer months. It is a good all-round biodiversity plant, with a long season for feeding pollinators and a rich source of seed for birds in the winter.

In a climate with relatively mild, wet winters, green rules, and so this is a garden where interest and variation are created through a huge range of plant shapes and textures. Groundcover plants, primarily species of *Liriope,* are used in places, but dotted with other species, often ferns, for which they act as a foil. Plant selection had to take account of runoff from further up the hill and a heavy clay soil. "It had incredible drainage issues in places," says Lucy. "We tried to work with what we had rather than replace, and we had consultations with some engineers who advised on drainage." In some places Dan and Lucy also added around 2cm of gravel to the soil and even top-dressed with it.

One of the most interesting and innovative aspects of this garden is the use of the two rows of *Calycanthus occidentalis*, ▷



Right *Stipa gigantea* sparkles with backlighting against a dark background, the classic positioning for this very long-lived grass. To its left a mixed planting of *Perovskia* 'Little Spire', *Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan', *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus' and *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat') dominate the area surrounding a formal reflecting pool.

This is a garden where interest and variation are created through a huge range of plant shapes and textures

Matrix planting with green groundcovers

In the damper, shadier part of this garden Lucy and Dan used grass-like plants, such as *Liriope muscari,* dotted with a range of other foliage plants. "I've always used a lot of liriope," says Lucy, "it's evergreen, tough and covers the ground but does not compete too much with other plants, and it's a whole lot nicer to look at than mulch." The plant acts as a matrix, filling in space around the ferns and other perennials dotted into it, but does not limit their growth. This low-maintenance concept is a variant on an increasingly important garden trend in the USA, the use of groundcover sedges (*Carex* species) as a grass alternative, particularly in shaded areas where there is no foot traffic. The most common species used is *C. pensylvanica*, although the designer Piet Oudolf is known for his use of others, including *C. laxiculmis*. Piet has also experimented with the matrix look over the past few years, with the low grass *Sesleria autumnalis* the most successful to date, having the right, modest non-competitive rate of spread.

▷ a shrub trained as a small tree. "We chose it because here it tends to flower all summer long and the winter structure is good," says Dan. Like all shrubs it produces multiple stems from the base but here it has been trained so that one stem is trained as a trunk, the others having been pruned away. This is not always easy to do, but is clearly successful with the relatively slow-growing calycanthus. The result is an attractive small tree that will not get any taller than four metres.

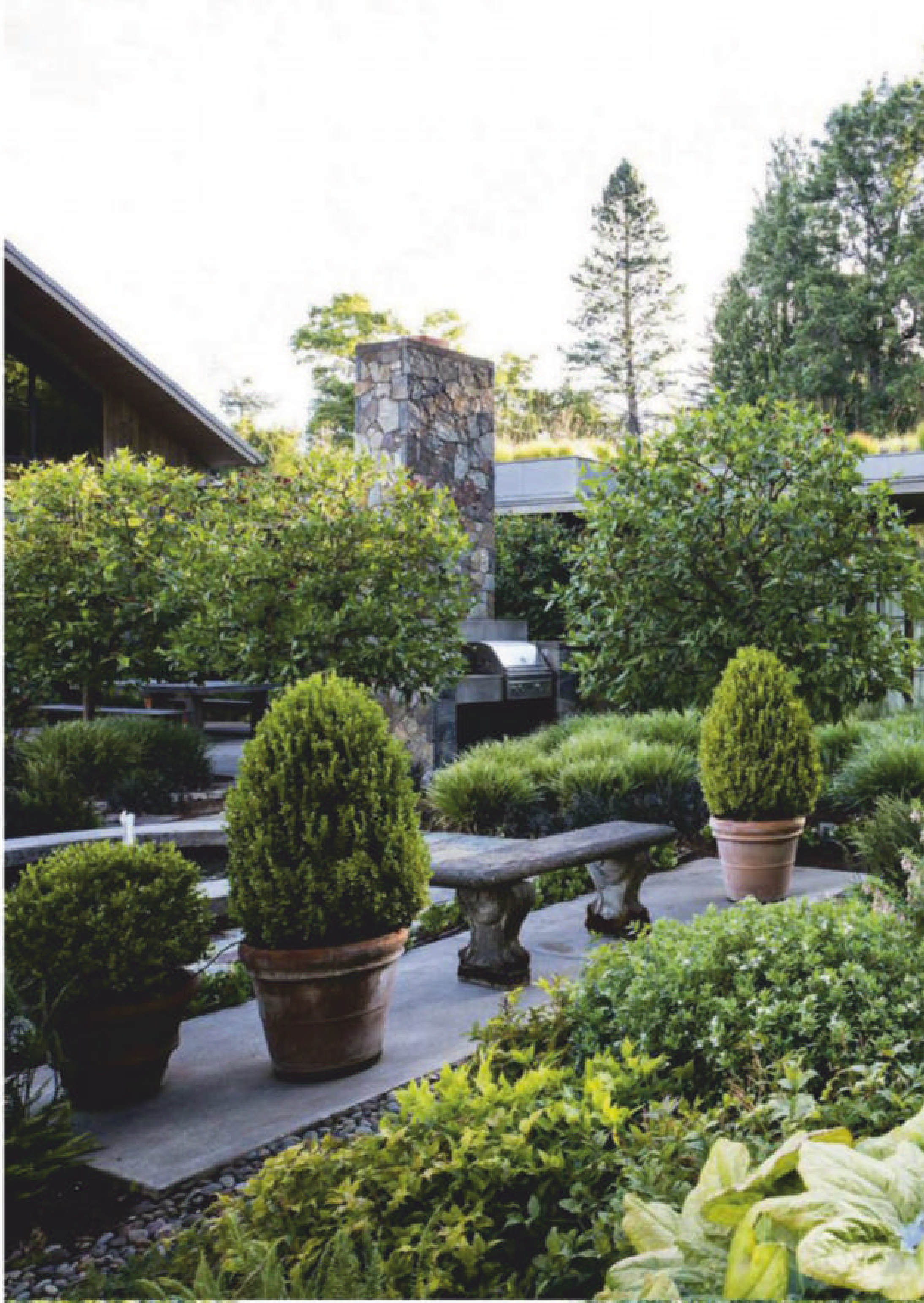
Portland experiences dry summers, and so there is an irrigation system, although Dan does say that: "I am not generally a believer in irrigation, among other things irrigation systems often become superfluous in a few years once plants have become established, but there were certain places here where we felt we had to have it, and summers here have been very dry recently."

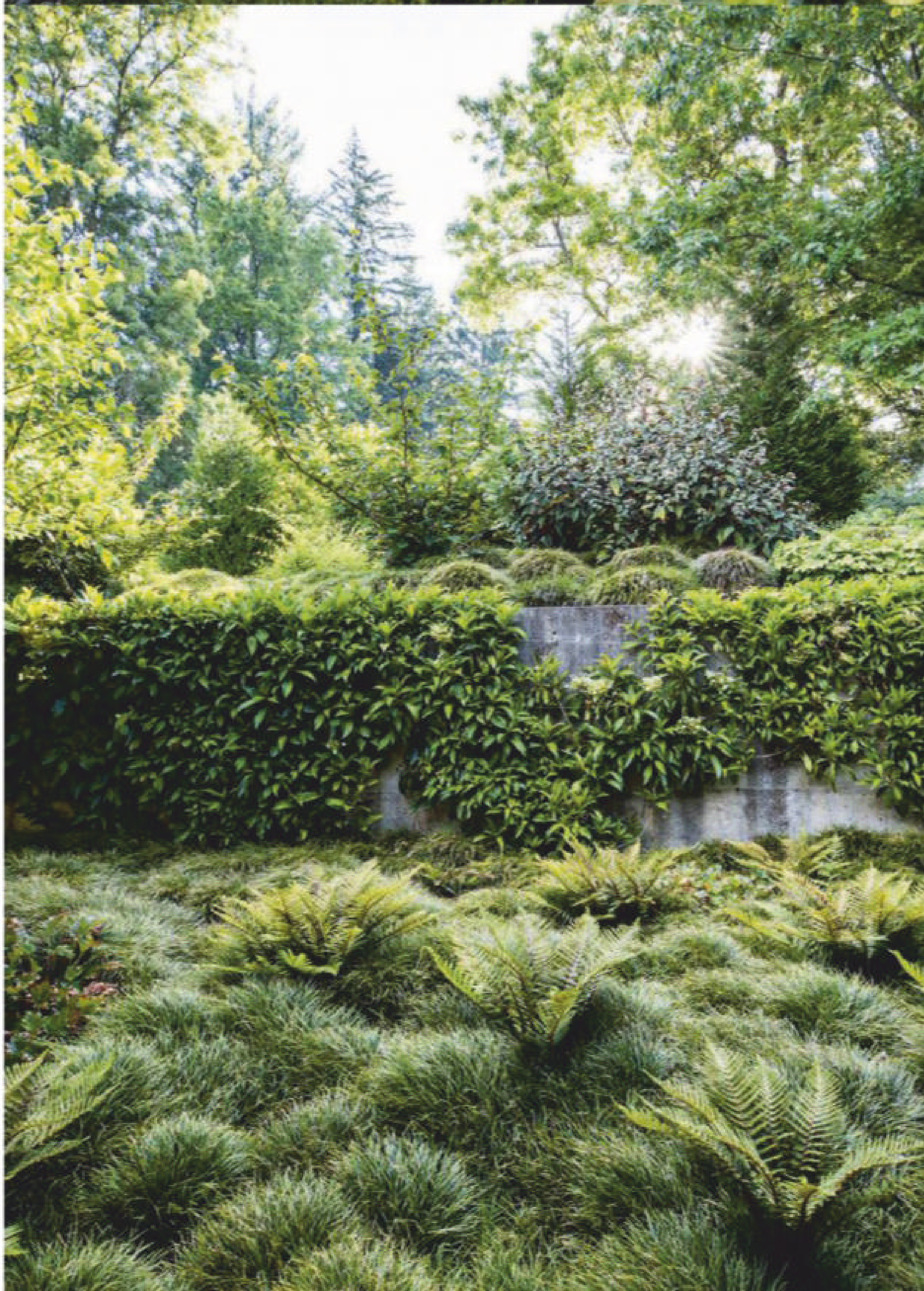
I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall listening to Dan and Lucy plan this garden; I would have learned so much, and as Lucy notes: "A collaboration gives you more diversity and a better outcome." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

You can find out more about Lucy's work at **lucyflora.com** and for more information on Dan's work visit **danieljhinkley.com**

Turn the page for 30 key plants from the garden





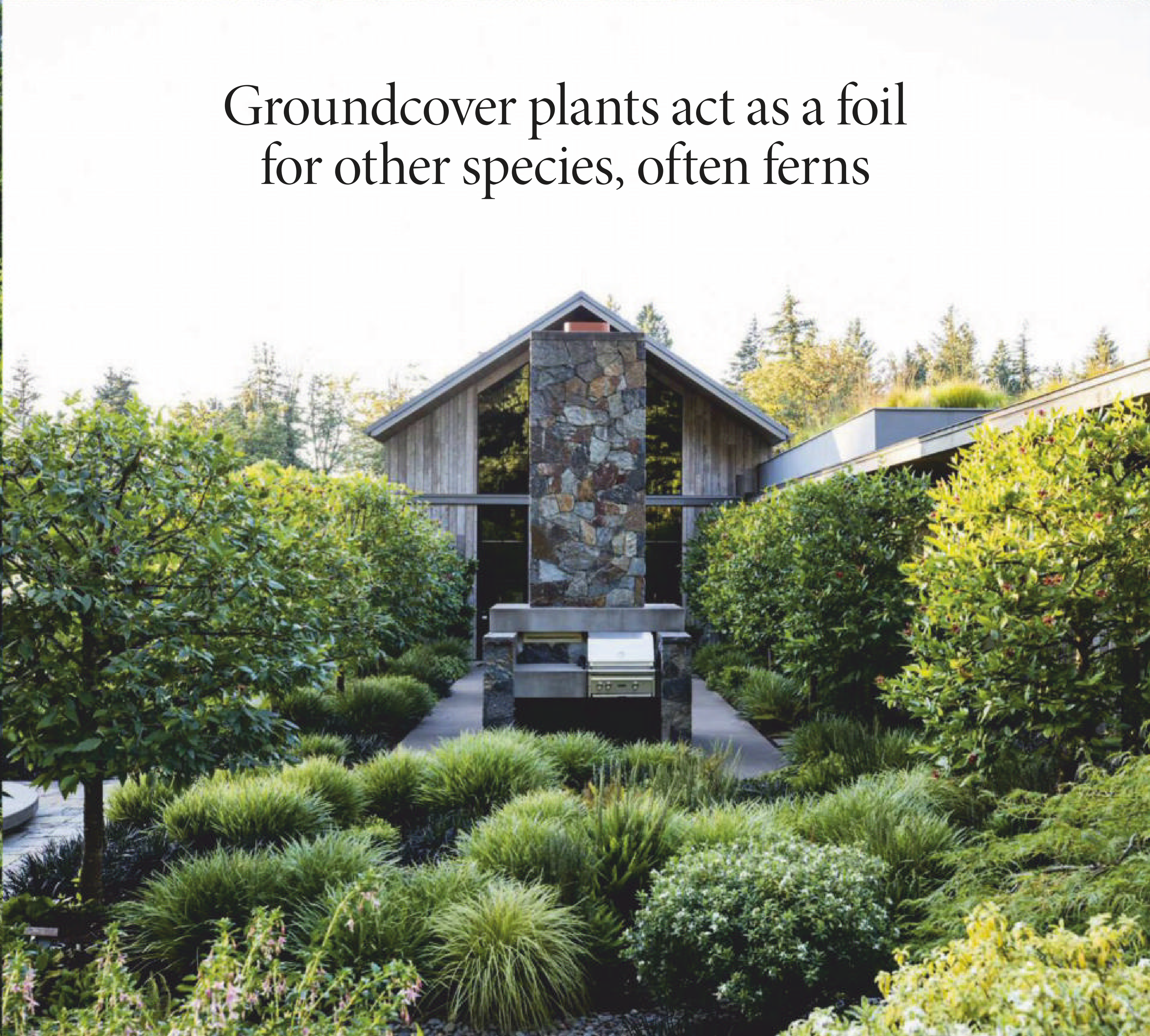
Clockwise from top left

Tree-trained *Calycanthus occidentalis* dominate the background to a small pool, with *Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa' growing in pots nearby. Other shrubs, include *Fuchsia* 'Whiteknights Pearl' flowering in the centre of the bed with *Daphne* x *transatlantica* Eternal Fragrance (= 'Blafra'). Also, the fern *Blechnum spicant* and the pale-green foliage of *Podophyllum pleianthemum*.

A madrone tree, *Arbutus menzeisii,* overlooks the rear of the garden, with *Enkianthus campanulatus*, *Hydrangea scandens* subsp. *chinensis* f. *angustipetala* 'Golden Crane', *Daphne* x *transatlantica* Eternal Fragrance (= 'Blafra'), *Blechnum spicant* and groundcovering *Cotoneaster* x *suecicus* 'Coral Beauty'.

***Calycanthus occidentalis* frame a terrace** with a barbecue. In front is *Daphne* x *transatlantica* Eternal Fragrance (= 'Blafra') and tufts of evergreen *Carex* 'Ice Dance', a tough sedge useful for a wide range of less-than-perfect conditions *Fuchsia* 'Whiteknights Pearl' appears in the foreground.

Self-clinging climber *Hydrangea serratifolia* covers a wall. *Ophiopogon japonicus* is used as an evergreen groundcover, with the evergreen fern *Polystichum polyblepharum* dotted around for some structural interest; this fern is noted for lustrously shiny fronds.



Groundcover plants act as a foil for other species, often ferns

30 KEY PLANTS

1 *Hosta* 'Ming Treasure'
A *Hosta plantaginea* cultivar with broad, chartreuse-edged leaves. Prefers both light shade and a moisture-retentive soil. 50cm x 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b[†].

2 *Pieris japonica* 'White Rim'
A shrub with fiery red new growth and white flowers in spring. 4m x 2m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

3 *Beesia calthifolia*
An evergreen groundcover, with attractive foliage, but inconspicuous flowers. 40cm x 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

4 *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* 'Fastigiata' Distinctive yew-like conifer, upright habit. Potentially, decorative berries. 3m x 1.8m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

5 *Hydrangea serratifolia*
Self-clinging climber with white flowerheads. Slow to start, eventually vigorous. 5m x 3m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

6 *Polystichum polyblepharum*
Semi-evergreen glossy fronds, full to light shade. Relatively vigorous. 60cm x 60cm. AGM[*]. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

7 *Ophiopogon japonicus*
Known as mondo grass or lilyturf, this spreading evergreen perennial is a perfect groundcover for shade. 15cm x 30cm. RHS H6, USDA 7a-10b.

8 *Berberis thunbergii* 'Orange Rocket'
Orange foliage from spring, followed by fiery autumn colours. Can be trimmed. 1.2m x 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

9 *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Pee Wee'
Slowly suckering shrub with good autumn colour and white flowerheads. 1.5m x 1m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

10 *Calycanthus occidentalis*
A deciduous shrub with a long season of small, aromatic red flowers. 4m x 3m. RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

11 *Nandina domestica* 'Gulf Stream'
A compact form of a familiar foliage shrub. Provides good autumn colour. 1.5m x 1m. RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

12 *Actaea simplex* 'Black Negligee'
One of the darkest-leaved cultivars, tall spires of white flowers in late summer. 1.5m x 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

13 *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens' Slow-growing groundcover with purple-black foliage. Reliably evergreen and amazing for contrast. 20cm x 30cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.

14 *Solanum crispum* 'Glasnevin'
Known as the Chilean potato vine, this lax, evergreen shrub – effectively a climber – produces purple and yellow flowers like those of the potato plant. 4m x 2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-11b.

15 *Phygelius capensis*
Rangy shrub, usually cut down in the winter, with a long summer flowering season. 1.5m x 1m. RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b.

16 *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'
Slowly spreading grass of great elegance. Will tolerate some shade. 45cm x 80cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

17 *Blechnum spicant*
A fern with narrowly elegant foliage, for shade. Best on well-drained, acid soils. 50cm x 30cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

18 *Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan'
Produces big white daisies in mid to late summer. Plant has a lifespan of around five years. 80cm x 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

19 *Hydrangea paniculata* Little Lime (= 'Jane')
One of the hardiest hydrangeas, with a long flowering season. Sun or light shade. 1.5m x 1.5m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

20 *Darmera peltata*
Spreading, waterside plant with early pink flowers and dramatic foliage. Grows to around 1.5m when in flower. 1.5m x 1m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

21 *Acorus gramineus* 'Ogon'
Dense tufts of semi-evergreen foliage carpeting damp ground. 30cm x 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

22 *Perovskia* 'Little Spire'
Compact form of drought-tolerant species that flowers midsummer. 1m x 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

23 *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail'
Has a long flowering season from summer to autumn and good foliage. Likes damp soil. 1.2m x 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

24 *Carex* 'Ice Dance'
A slowly spreading, evergreen sedge for light shade. Best in moist soil. 30cm x 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

25 *Stipa gigantea*
An evergreen, clump-forming grass with huge but airy sprays of flowerheads and seedheads. 1.2m x 1m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.

26 *Molinia caerulea* 'Moorflamme'
Upright grass with attractive inflorescences from midsummer to early winter. 80cm x 80cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

27 *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat')
Its late-season blue flowers have a sprawling growth from a tight clump. 25cm x 90cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

28 *Ilex* x *meserveae*
Slow-growing holly with blue-tinged foliage. If a male plant is present, female plants will produce red berries. 5m x 3m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

29 *Agastache* 'Apricot Sunrise'
Offers a long, late season of pale-orange flowers, on semi-shrubby plant. Prefers sun. 1m x 1m. RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

30 *Pittosporum tobira* 'Variegatum'
Sprawling but shapely evergreen shrub. Good for coastal gardens but not hardy. 4m x 6m. RHS H3, USDA 9a-10b.

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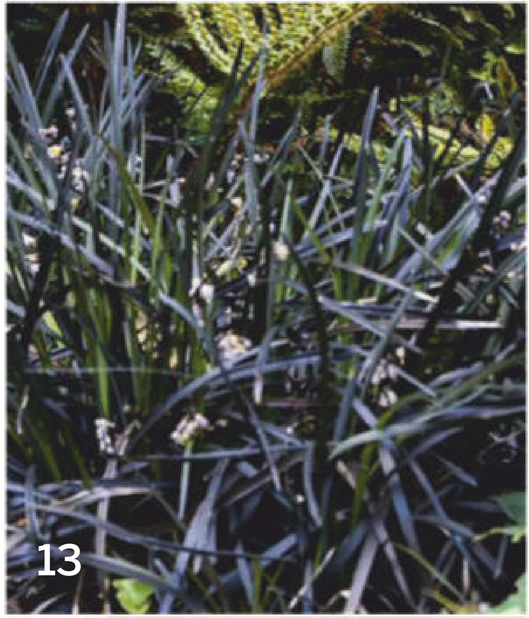
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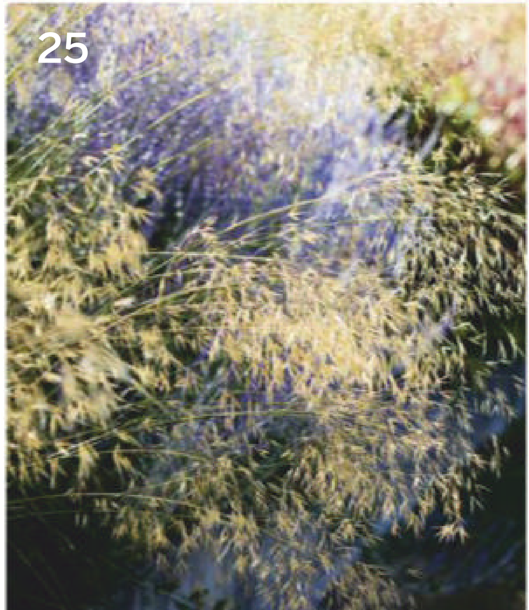
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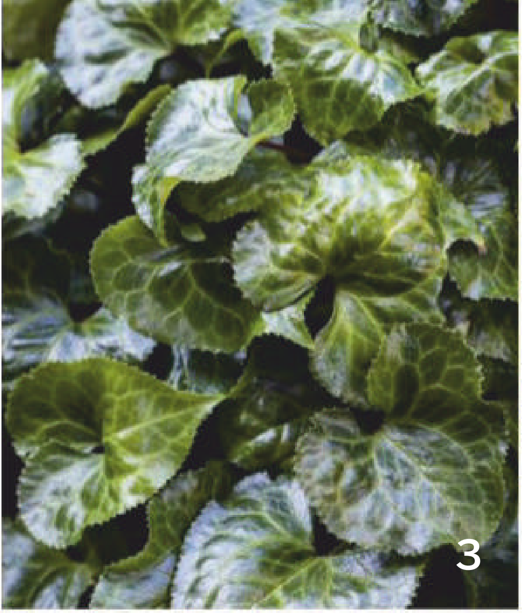
[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.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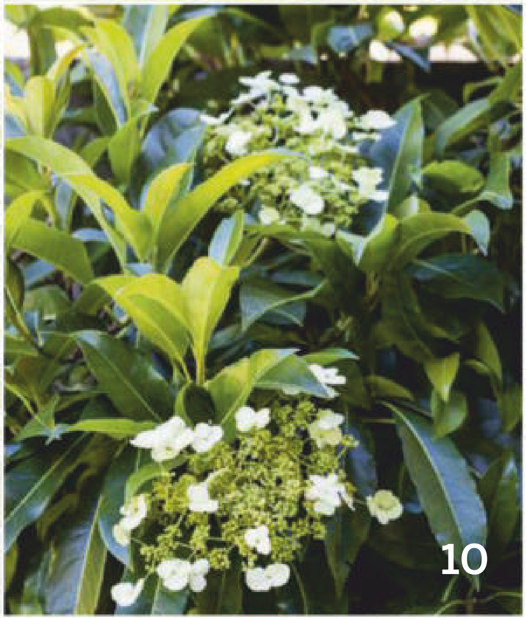
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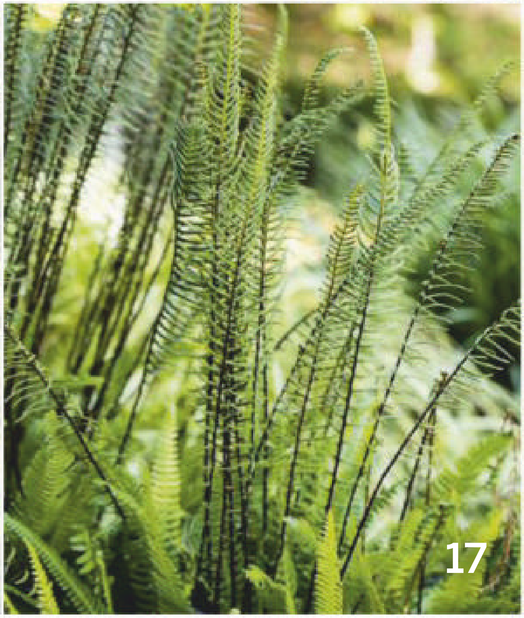
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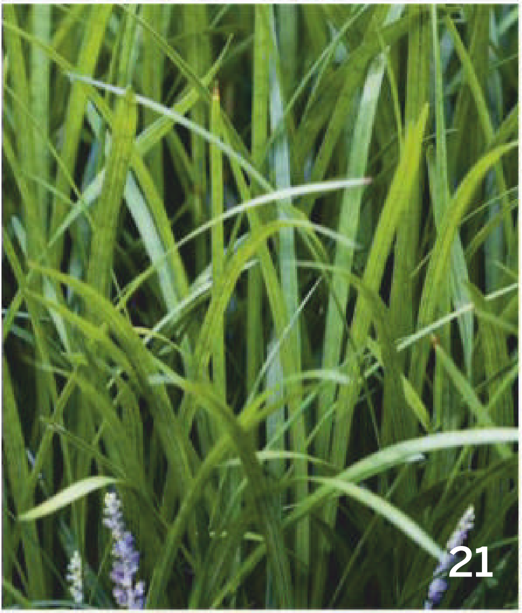
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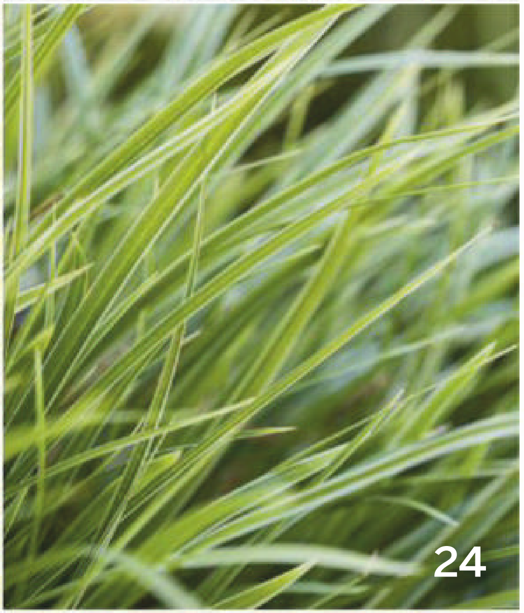
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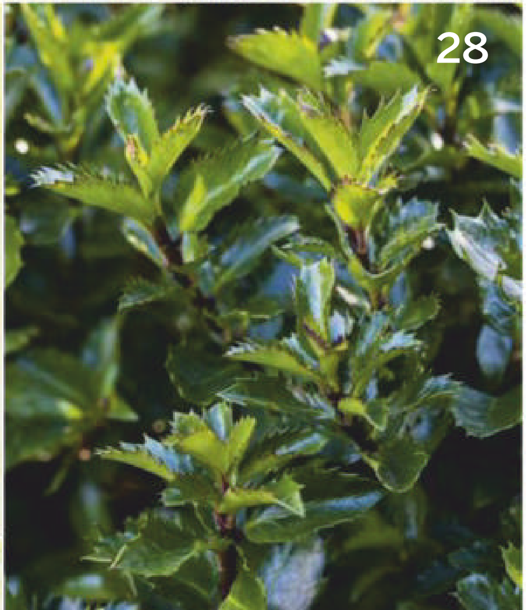
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GROWING WITHOUT SOIL

It may sound radical but growing plants in sand or biochar will encourage greater moisture retention and nutrient uptake and mean less watering and ongoing maintence in hot summers

WORDS **JOSHUA SPARKES** ILLUSTRATION **VICKI TURNER**

Gardeners are raised on the idea that a thick mulch will benefit the garden, but what if this is wrong? Research from Chicago Botanical Gardens has found it is better for plants and soil microbes to live in leaner conditions, only applying compost at 2.5cm maximum while using the odd soil amendment to aid soil life. Or an even more extreme thought, what if we cut out soil completely?

Growing without soil is an approach used in urban planting to reduce maintenance costs, tackle more extreme weather and combat limited resources. It sounds radical and it challenges everything we know about our plants. A pioneer of this technique is Swedish gardener, nurseryman and designer Peter Korn, who with his partner Julia Andersson has created a horticultural Eden at Klinta Trädgård in southern Sweden growing purely in sand.

By using sand as both a permanent mulch in the garden and a growing medium Korn raises plants that are stronger and more resilient to adverse conditions. The idea is to grow them slowly and in a harsher environment that often results in a smaller, more delicate form, requiring no staking and less ongoing care. The astonishing moisture retention of the sand and the strong fungal and mycorrhizal communities it encourages further aid water and nutrient uptake, making regular watering unnecessary. This may be because sand contains fewer microbial competitors than rich soil. Peter Korn's planting survived through two record-breaking Swedish droughts without irrigating once. While it won't satisfy all horticultural needs – vegetables and the traditional beefy, hungry English herbaceous border still love the rich soil – sand planting has a huge amount of benefits.

Alternatively, consider a sustainable and beneficial soil amendment, biochar. Biohar is a by-product of intensive, low-oxygen burning, a process called pyrolysis. This isn't anything new, it is thought ancient Amazonians used to burn all their farm waste in a similar process. When used with the soil the biochar acts as a sponge, absorbing and storing water and nutrients. It improves soil structure, reduces soil compaction, increases soil fertility and creates habitat space for soil microbes. All that is needed is a thin scattering mixed into your compost and the benefits will last well over a thousand years.

Biochar retains more than half of its carbon, reducing the amount released into our atmosphere. Compost only traps around 10-20 per cent, which results in huge carbon loss – a key contributor to global warming. □

FIND OUT MORE
Garden: Giving Plants What They Want by Peter Korn
(Peter Korn, 2013).

Sand beds

- If your garden soil is already rich in organic matter from years of compost, then a sand mulch cannot be applied as it will remove the sand's ability to retain moisture by drawing it out.
- The sand used must be a sharp sand measuring 0.05-0.08mm in size and must be pre-washed to remove any salt or lime.
- Lay the sand as a mulch at around 10-15cm to prevent weed growth or simply place into a raised bed.
- Always plant bare-rooted into the sand. Before planting make sure you wash the plant's roots to remove all compost and soil.
- Once planted give the plant a good watering to close air pockets around the roots and stop when the sand becomes smooth again.
- Although most plants benefit from this system, some won't. Avoid extremely hungry plants and varieties, such as exotics and vegetables.

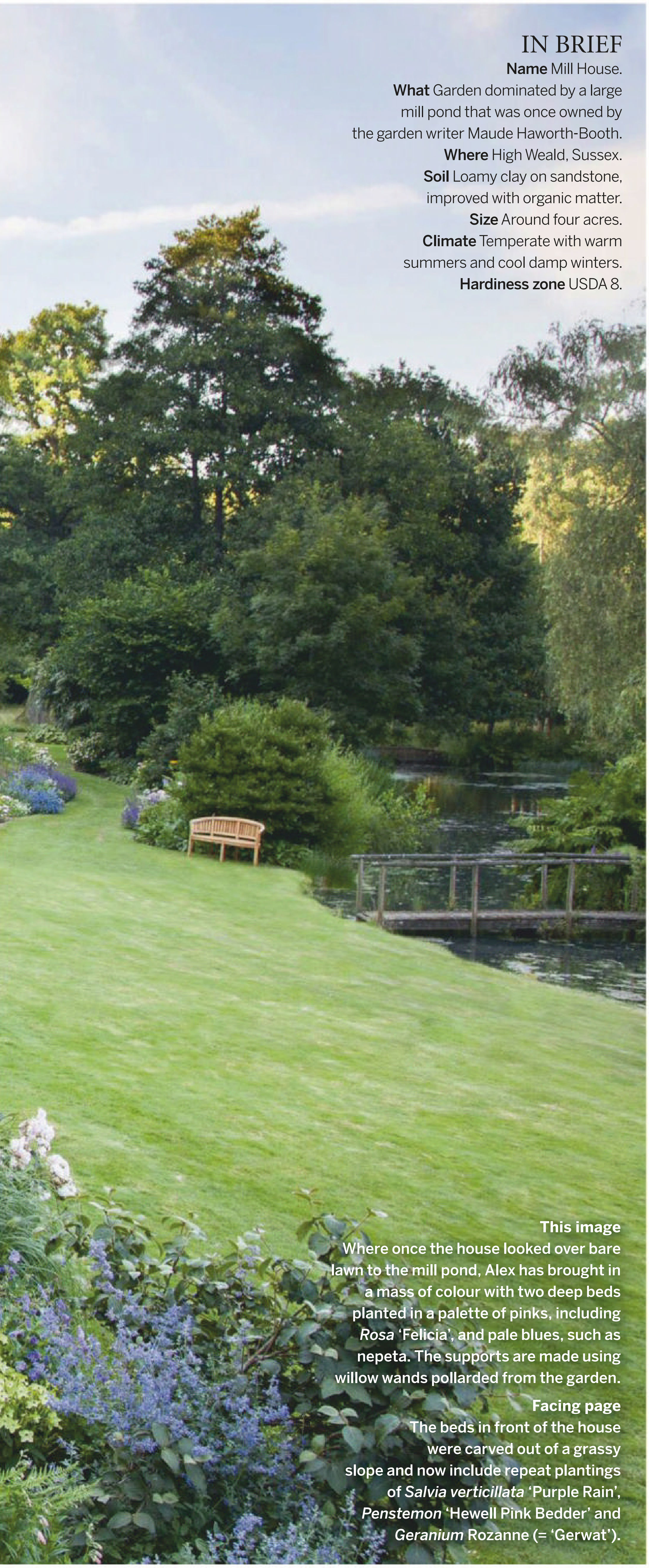
Biochar

- You can make your own biochar stove but it will require some research. However, you can buy ready-made biochar.
- Always inoculate homemade or fresh biochar, otherwise it will act as a nutrient sponge for a few years before offering any benefit to the soil. The simplest way to inoculate your biochar is by adding it to a compost heap where it will become full of microbes and nutrients. This will have the additional benefit of speeding up the decomposition time of the heap.
- Apply the biochar-activated compost as a thin mulch on top of the soil's surface.
- Inoculating biochar rapidly increases soil microbial growth and especially the development of mycorrhiza, a key fungus for healthy plant development.

BY THE BOOK

Having worked on this Sussex garden for more than 20 years, gardener and designer Alex Bell has himself added a new chapter to its history

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANNAÏCK GUITTENY**

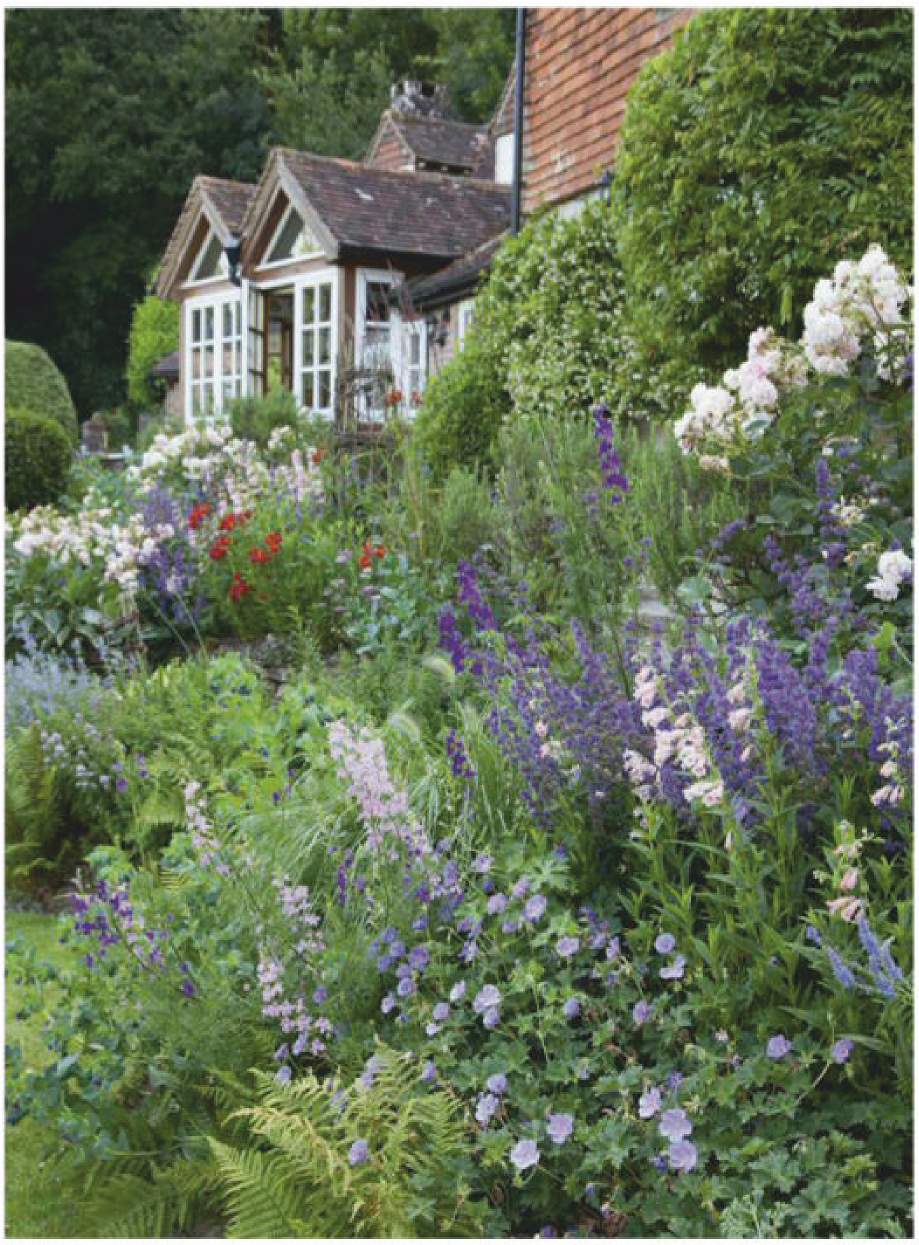


IN BRIEF

Name Mill House.
What Garden dominated by a large mill pond that was once owned by the garden writer Maude Haworth-Booth.
Where High Weald, Sussex.
Soil Loamy clay on sandstone, improved with organic matter.
Size Around four acres.
Climate Temperate with warm summers and cool damp winters.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

This image Where once the house looked over bare lawn to the mill pond, Alex has brought in a mass of colour with two deep beds planted in a palette of pinks, including *Rosa* 'Felicia', and pale blues, such as nepeta. The supports are made using willow wands pollarded from the garden.

Facing page The beds in front of the house were carved out of a grassy slope and now include repeat plantings of *Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Rain', *Penstemon* 'Hewell Pink Bedder' and *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat').



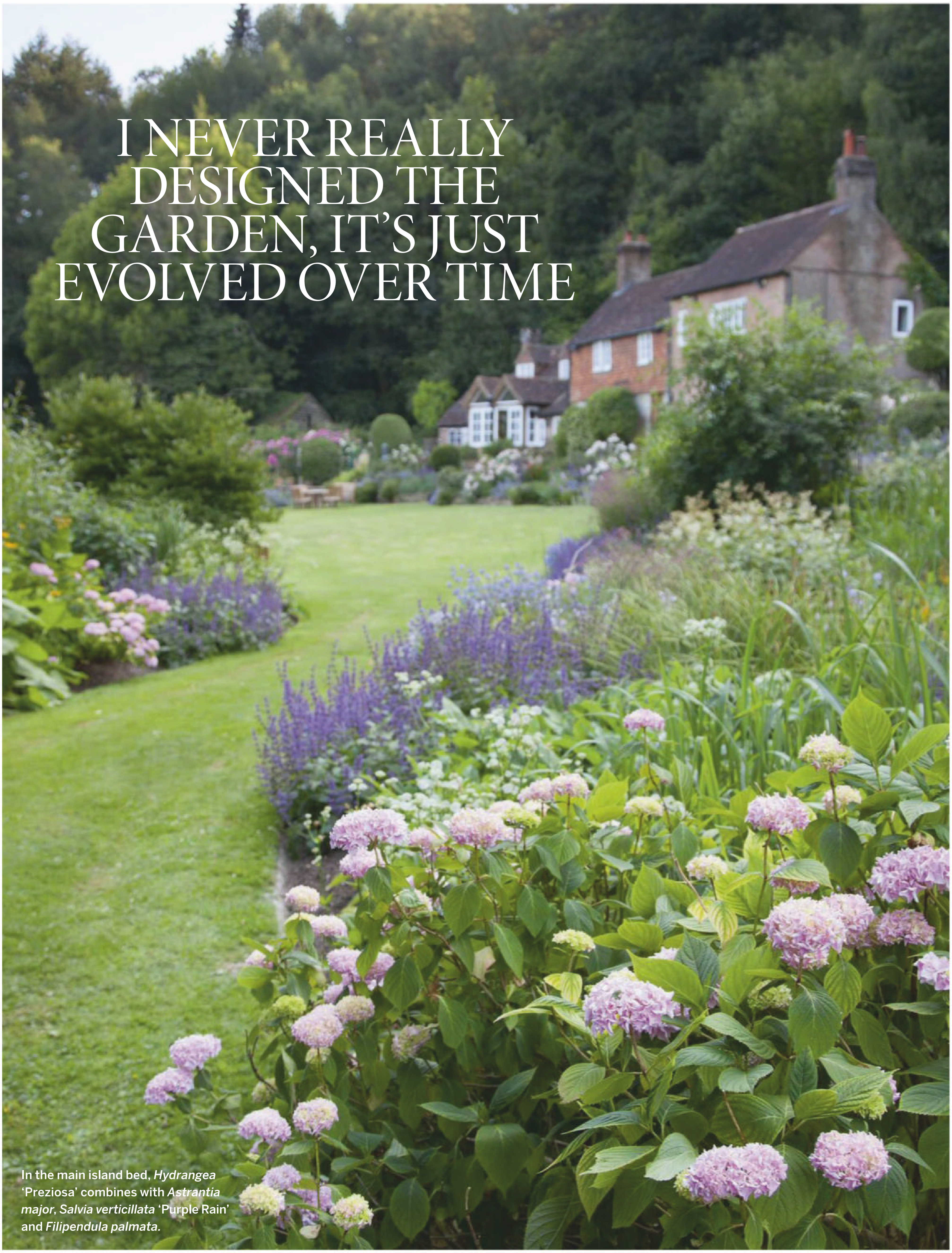
Tucked away down a deep valley in the High Weald of Sussex, the garden of Mill House has a fascinating history. It once belonged to Maude Haworth-Booth, a keen gardener who was so besotted by her garden that she is remembered for being out in her nightie tending to it at six in the morning. She wrote a book, *My Garden Diary,* that was published in 1934 and included a preface by friend and neighbour William Robinson, author of *The Wild Garden*. The planting plans it includes attest that Haworth-Booth shared Robinson's ideas about the joys of perennials, indicating swathes of asters and irises among drifts of phlox and anchusas.

When Alison and Graeme Musker bought the house and garden in 1998, almost all trace of Maude's plantings had gone. What did remain was a magnificent, one-acre mill pond and it was this that captured the couple's imagination. "The light on the water, the reflections of the trees, it was magical," says Alison.

Asking around for a gardener they were introduced to Alex Bell, then in his early twenties. Little did he imagine that more than 20 years later he would still be working here, albeit now tending to a garden that is markedly different from the one he first saw. "I never really designed it," he says. "Alison and Graeme have very kindly gone along with most of my suggestions and it's just evolved over time."

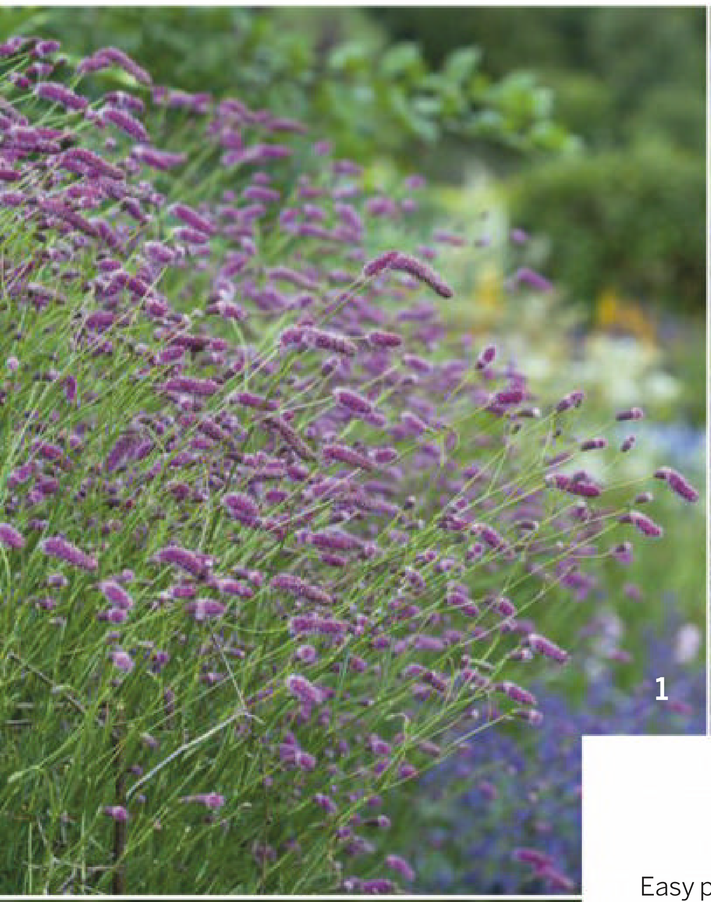
For Alex, the challenge has been how to conserve the wild, romantic feeling the water brings while fulfilling the owners' wishes to have more colour. "I did consider recreating Maude's planting," he says, "but many of the plants either didn't flower for long enough or were too high maintenance. I'm here one day a week, helped by another gardener and we just don't have time for intense work. I want to make the garden look good in the time I have, and for that I need ▷

To continue turn to page 95



I NEVER REALLY DESIGNED THE GARDEN, IT'S JUST EVOLVED OVER TIME

In the main island bed, *Hydrangea* 'Preziosa' combines with *Astrantia major*, *Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Rain' and *Filipendula palmata*.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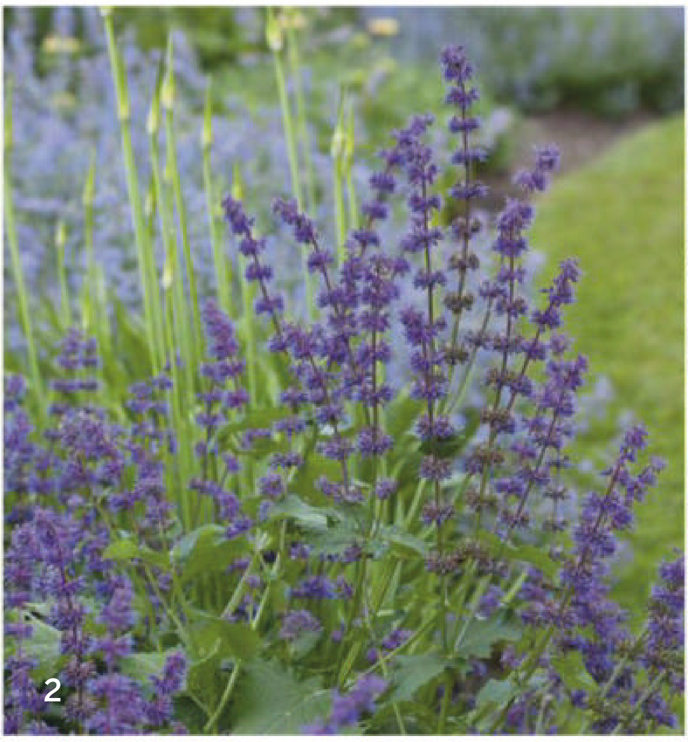
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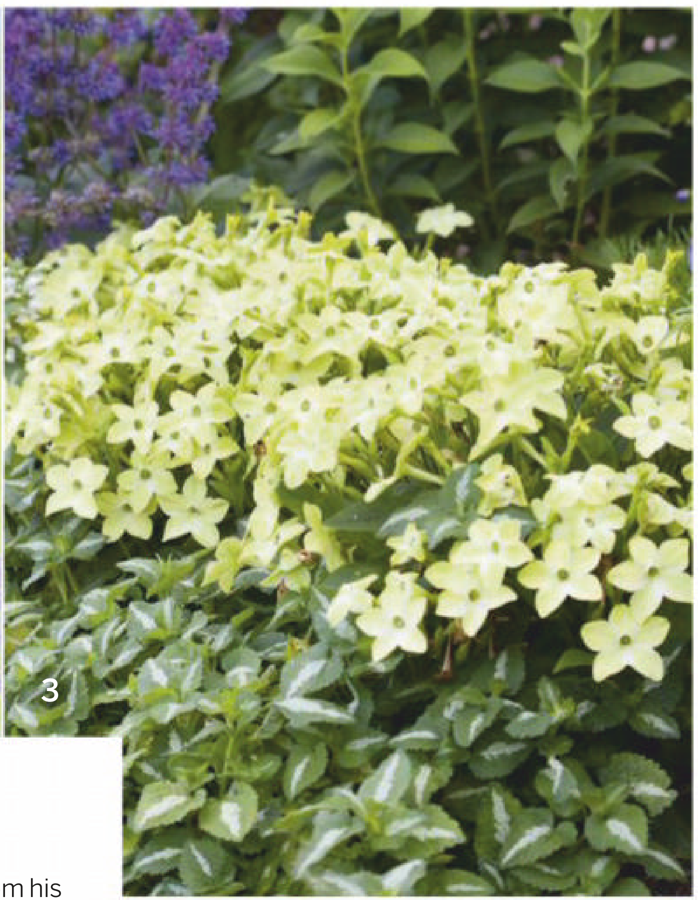
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8 KEY PLANTS

1 *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Purpurea'
Easy perennial that flowers from June to August. Alex brought it from his own garden and has since split and replanted it in various spots. 1.5m.

2 *Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Rain'
A healthy plant whose upright stems are covered in copious whorls of purple flowers from May to August if deadheaded. Doesn't like winter wet. 75cm. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b[†].

3 *Nicotiana* 'Lime Green'
Very long flowering and likes a moist (but well-drained) spot. Makes good contrast to the salvia. 60cm. AGM*. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11b.

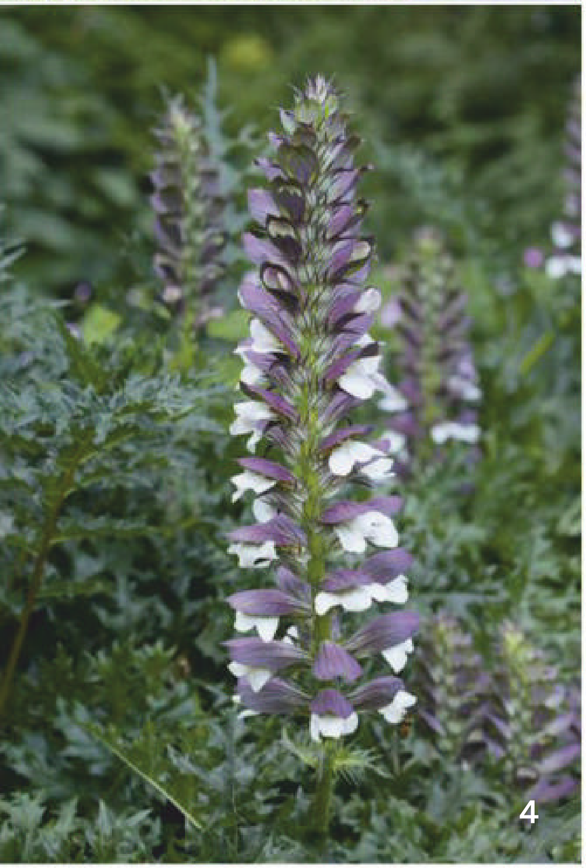
4 *Acanthus spinosus*
With glossy, deep-green foliage and erect stems bearing white flowers and contrasting purple bracts, this is an eye-catching plant for a shady spot. Will repeat flower if deadheaded. 1.2m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

5 *Penstemon* 'Hewell Pink Bedder'
Easy to grow from cuttings, this very long-flowering penstemon produces panicles of tubular, pale-pink flowers with a red throat. Prefers well-drained soil and will not tolerate winter wet. 70cm. AGM. RHS H4.

6 *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle'
Deciduous shrub bearing huge, domed heads of tiny flowers that open white and fade slowly to lime green. Good for shade and damp soil. 1.7m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

7 *Inula magnifica*
A fast-growing, impressive perennial that can reach heights of up to 2.5m. The bright-yellow flowers are attractive to insects and the plant will happily self-seed. 2.5m. RHS H6.

8 *Rosa* 'Felicia'
A reliable shrub rose with beautifully scented, double flowers that fade to an elegant silvery pink as they open and age. 1.25m. AGM. RHS H6.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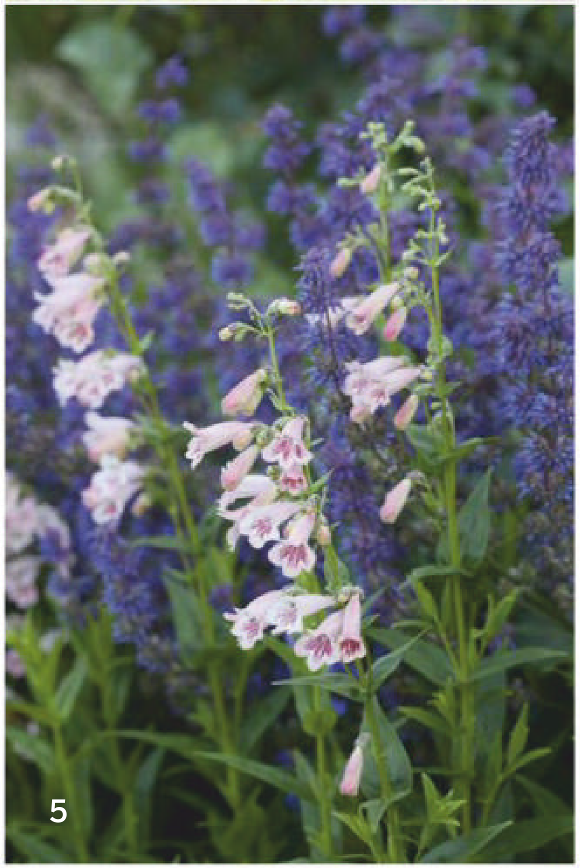
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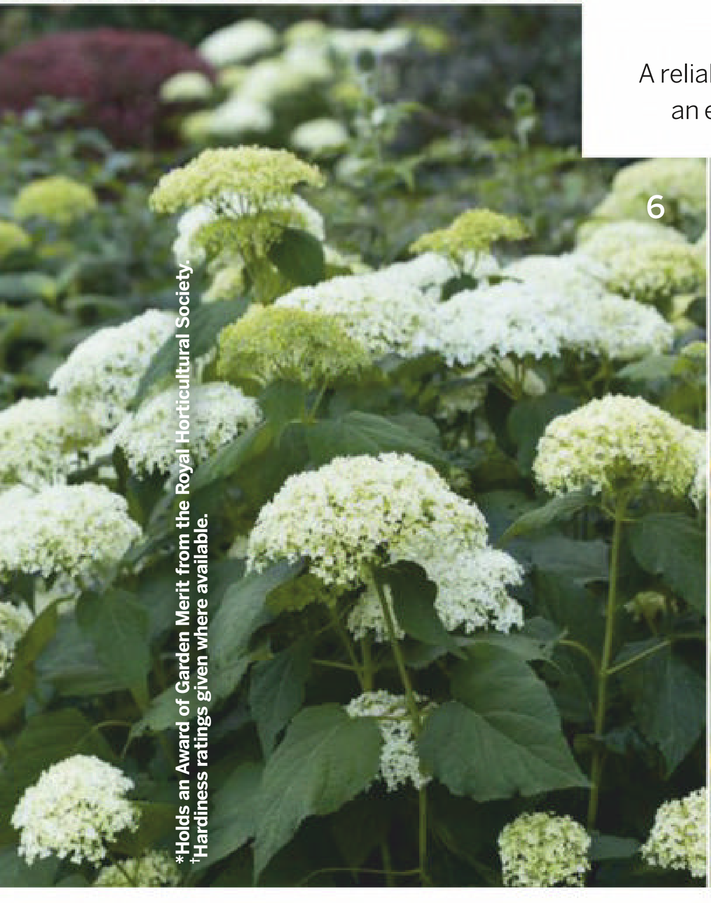
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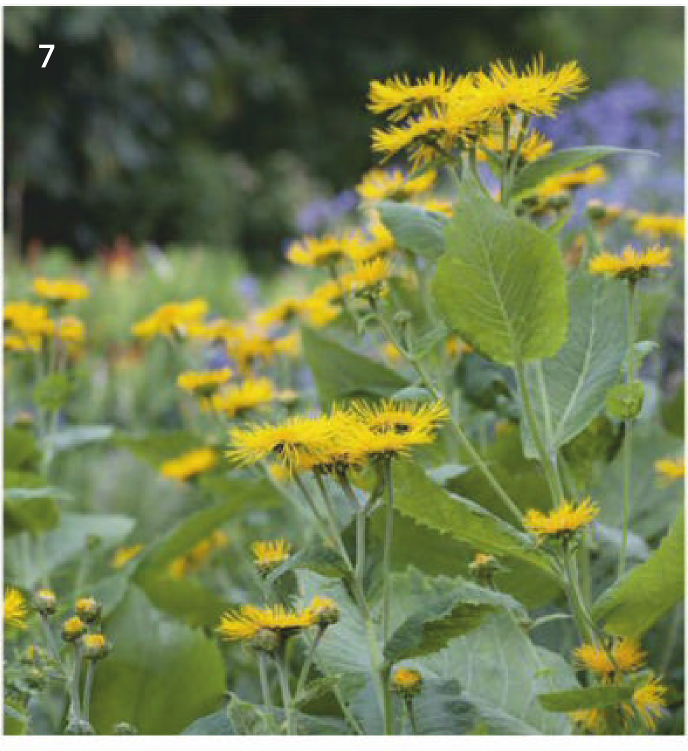
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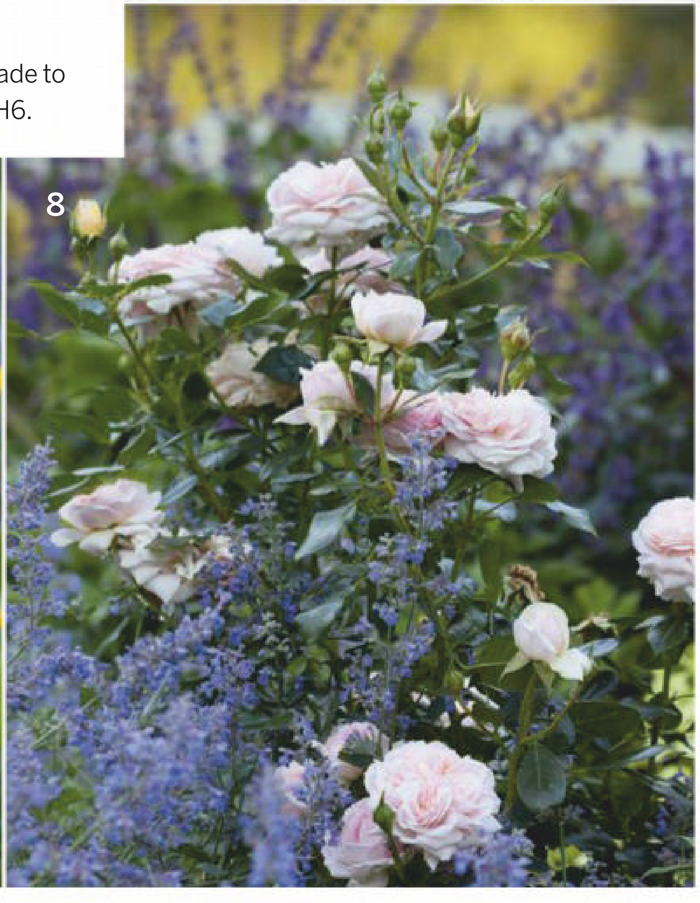
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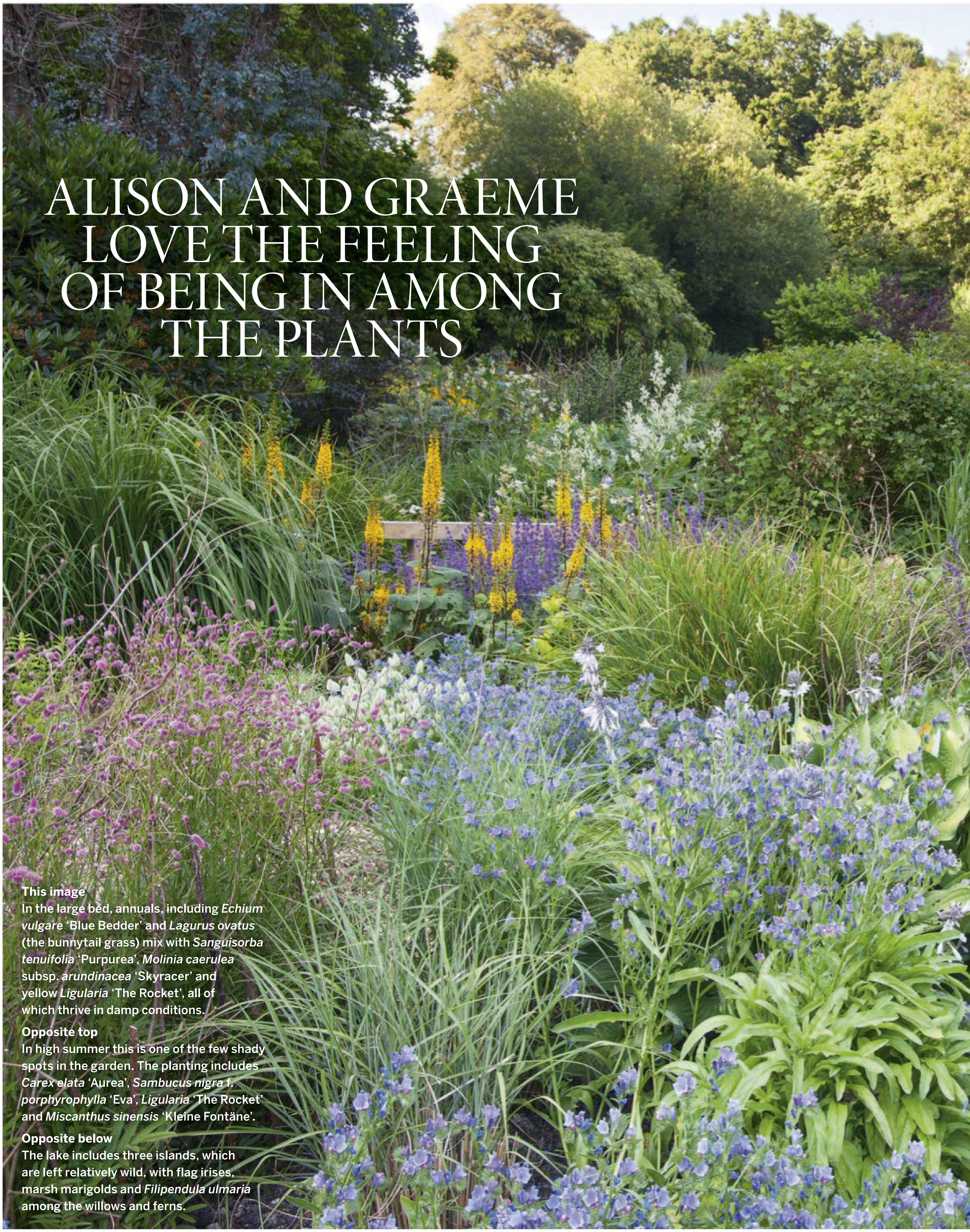
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†]Hardiness ratings given where available.

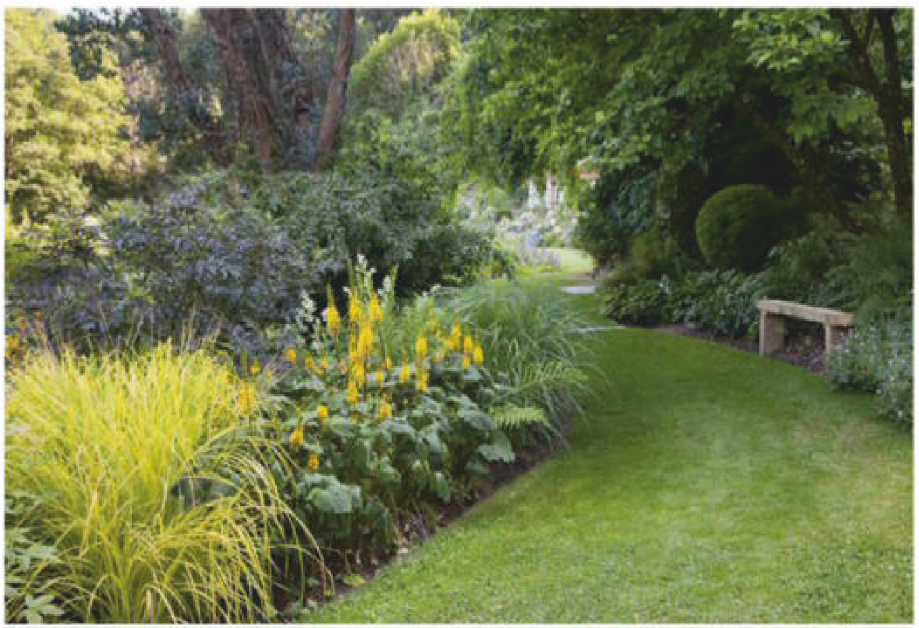


ALISON AND GRAEME LOVE THE FEELING OF BEING IN AMONG THE PLANTS

This image
In the large bed, annuals, including *Echium vulgare* 'Blue Bedder' and *Lagurus ovatus* (the bunnytail grass) mix with *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Purpurea', *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Skyracer' and yellow *Ligularia* 'The Rocket', all of which thrive in damp conditions.

Opposite top
In high summer this is one of the few shady spots in the garden. The planting includes *Carex elata* 'Aurea', *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva', *Ligularia* 'The Rocket' and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Fontäne'.

Opposite below
The lake includes three islands, which are left relatively wild, with flag irises, marsh marigolds and *Filipendula ulmaria* among the willows and ferns.



▷ healthy plants that will give colour from June to November, if not longer."

These plants – *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat'), *Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Rain' and *S.* 'Amistad' chief among them – Alex has marshalled into the existing beds (left fallow for a year to clear them of weeds) and into new areas he has carved out. His first major project was the grassy slope in front of the house, now planted in a palette of pinks and pale blues. Just beyond is Alex's most recent planting, inspired by a visit to nearby garden Sussex Prairies. "We came home one day and Alex was already pacing out a new border, so we thought we'd better go and have a look, too," says Alison. Luckily, she and Graeme also loved the naturalistic plantings and the feeling of being in among the plants, and Alex's wood-chip paths now allow them to do likewise, wandering between tall stands of *Miscanthus* x *giganteus*, *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Skyracer' and *Dahlia coccinea*.

Despite the size of the bed (25x25m), the majority of plants were split and replanted from stock already in the garden – *Veronica exaltata* from Alex's parents' garden; hydrangeas from a family wedding; *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Purpurea' from Alex's own garden. "I like that about plants – they tell a story," says Alex. Many of these were grown on in the drier soil of the stock beds at the top of the garden, where Alex also overwinters plants such as penstemons to save them from the worst of the weather.

"It's a challenging garden because we have everything from very boggy to very dry areas," says Alex, "but I've always loved being here. I've learned so much and Alison and Graeme aren't really clients now, they're friends. They've watched me grow up." □

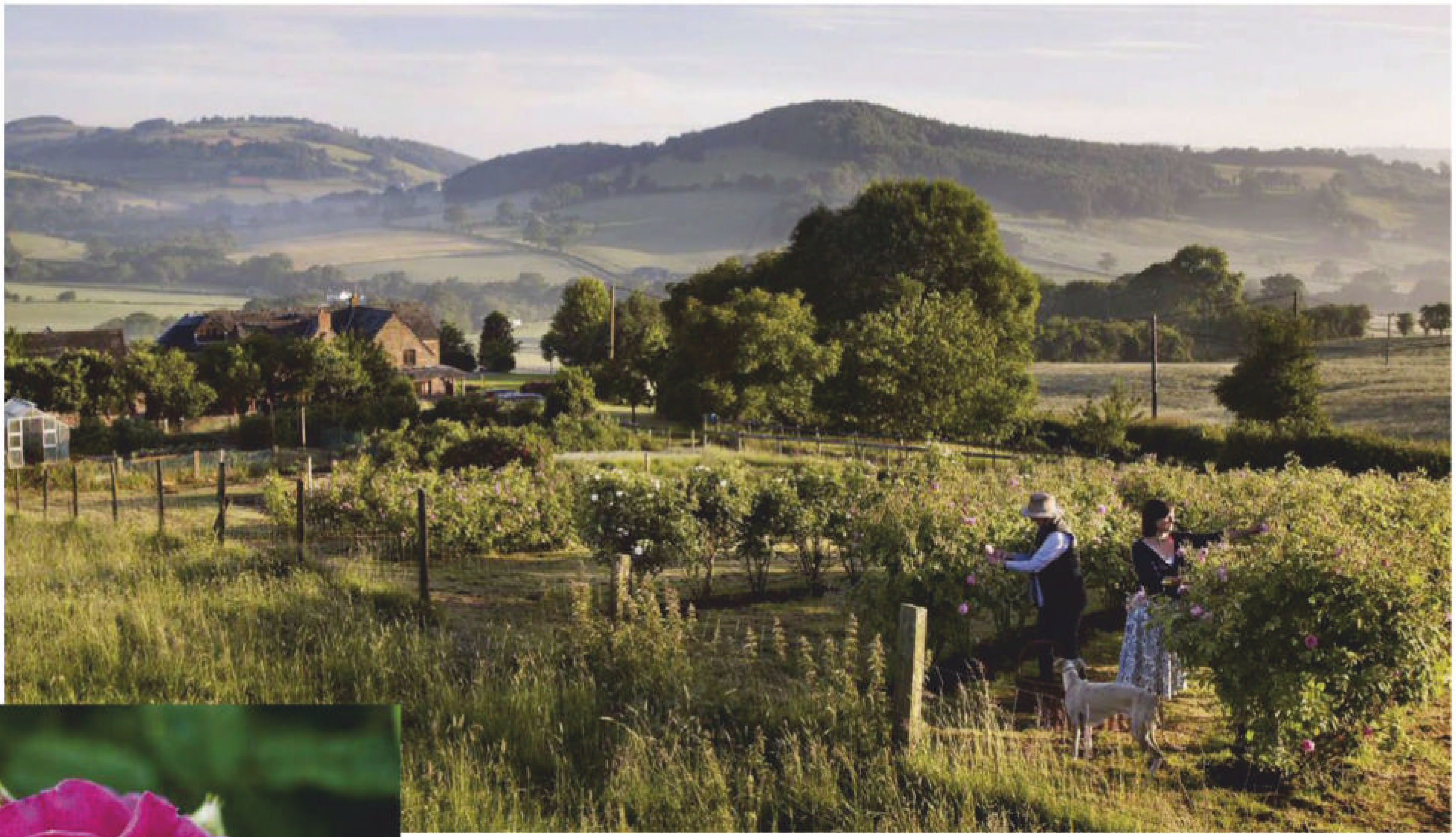
USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Alex's work at **alexbellgardendesign.co.uk**

Sweet scent of summer

From the unlikely setting of a Welsh farmhouse, the essence of summer is bottled to create a fragrant staple of Middle Eastern cooking

WORDS **ALYS HURN** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**



Clockwise from above

Roses are picked from fields in Monmouthshire's Monnow Valley.

Welsh rosewater, made from *Rosa x damascena*, is most fragrant of the three rosewaters and has many uses. It is bottled in Miron glass, a violet-tinted glass that helps to preserve the flavour.

***Rosa gallica* var. *officinalis*,** the traditional apothecary rose has a rich history and exotic scent.

On a sloping site in the breathtakingly beautiful Monnow Valley in Monmouthshire, friends Desdemona Freeman and Denise Jones are creating something unique: an artisan rosewater rich in essential oils. Unlike most commercially produced rosewater, theirs isn't a by-product of making rose oil – a process whereby the oil is separated out during distillation and the petals are distilled multiple times to squeeze out every last drop. Everything that goes into Desdemona and Denise's copper still remains throughout the distillation process to retain all the goodness and fragrance of the roses they grow. They are doing it the traditional way.

Making Welsh rosewater has been a big learning curve for both women. Neither had much experience of cultivating roses, before they started growing them behind Desdemona's farmhouse in 2009; their company Petals of the Valley didn't launch its first rosewater until 2014. It took time to research the distillation process, set up a still and put the rosewater through the rigorous testing it need to be approved for sale. "If we didn't have so much passion for what we were doing, we would have given up," admits Denise. "A steel core must run through both of us."

The roses are grown in heavy clay soil. The Welsh weather provides plenty of rain and, thanks to the site's sloping aspect, it has naturally good drainage. The roses are mulched with horse manure and although ▷

Clockwise from above

Denise (left) and Desdemona spread out the flowerheads to allow for harbouring insects to escape before the roses are packed away and stored in the freezer.

Roses are gathered early in the morning before the sun burns off the essential oils.

***Rosa* x *alba* 'Alba Maxima'** offers a lighter alternative to the heavy scent of its pink cousins.

▷ Petals of the Valley is not certified organic, the plants are grown according to organic principles. Pests are deterred with the help of companion planting and caterpillars are picked off and fed to the ducks.

The picking season from lasts six to eight weeks from May to late July, depending on the weather. There are no days off during this time. To ensure they harvest the flowers at their best, Desdemona and Denise pick the roses every day, starting at 5.30am so that they can harvest the flowerheads before the bees arrive and the sun burns off the essential oils. They choose the roses that have just burst open, the ones that are soft and still a little crumpled. After picking, the baskets of collected roses are left for a few hours to allow for any harbouring insects to escape. They are then bagged and stored in the freezer, as freezing breaks down the petals allowing more to fit in the still. By 8am when the gathering work is finished, the orders are ready to be packed.

Outside of picking times, the pair share the responsibility of distilling the rosewater. This is the most time-consuming part of the process, taking three to four hours from beginning to end. They start by filling the spherical, bottom half of the still with roses and fresh spring water. This is then heated by a gas burner underneath. Steam will gently rise up through the lid and travel through the copper tube, or swan neck, to the cylindrical condenser filled with cold spring water, where it will condensate into a liquid. This is the rosewater, which is collected in a glass demijohn. Throughout the process whoever is on distilling duty needs to be aware of the water going in and the water coming out, and carefully watch the condensing coil and listen to the still to make sure it sounds right.

Petals of the Valley uses three different roses in its range of rosewaters: *Rosa gallica* var. *officinalis* the traditional apothecary rose, which is dark pink in colour, wildly fragrant and the most exotic of the three; *Rosa* x *alba* 'Alba Maxima', a white rose, with a gentle, lemon-like fragrance, for those who prefer a lighter rose scent; and *Rosa* x ▷

THE CHANCE TO GROW

Left Gyan with her cauliflowers **Above** Farmers compare their vegetables at a competition in Bungamati, Nepal

THE BRITISH RED CROSS HAS A PROUD HISTORY OF HELPING PEOPLE ACROSS THE WORLD TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES – AND YOU CAN HELP TOO

With summer just around the corner, many of us are getting to work in our gardens and allotments. Others, however, might be choosing the slightly easier option of enjoying fresh seasonal and locally sourced produce, such as strawberries and courgettes. Whatever your preference, you're unlikely to come across anything quite as extraordinary as the bumper cauliflowers grown by Gyan Maharjan in Nepal. At an impressive 3.5kg, her huge cauliflowers are around four times bigger than the average cauliflower from a UK supermarket.

Gyan was one of more than a million people whose homes were destroyed in Nepal's devastating 2015 earthquake. Like thousands of other small farmers, Gyan lost her livelihood as well, making getting back to normal after the earthquake even harder. After the disaster, the British Red Cross supported more than 8,000 people with cash grants of around £140, which were used to buy seeds, tools and other things they needed to start farming again.

"Before I received the grant, I didn't have enough food to feed my children," says Gyan. "I used the money I was given to buy seeds and fertiliser, which is expensive but important as it helps to protect the vegetables from insects." The British Red Cross also trained Gyan and more than 6,000 others in gardening skills to help them grow better crops. "I have grown cauliflower, coriander, garlic and different types of spinach," says Gyan. "I'm surprised at how big my cauliflowers have become!"

LEAVE YOUR OWN LEGACY

Only through the generosity of its supporters can the British Red Cross always be on hand to help those in crisis – whether they're on the other side of the world or on your own street. By leaving a gift in your will, you can leave a lasting legacy and ensure this vital charity can continue to support vulnerable people for many years to come.

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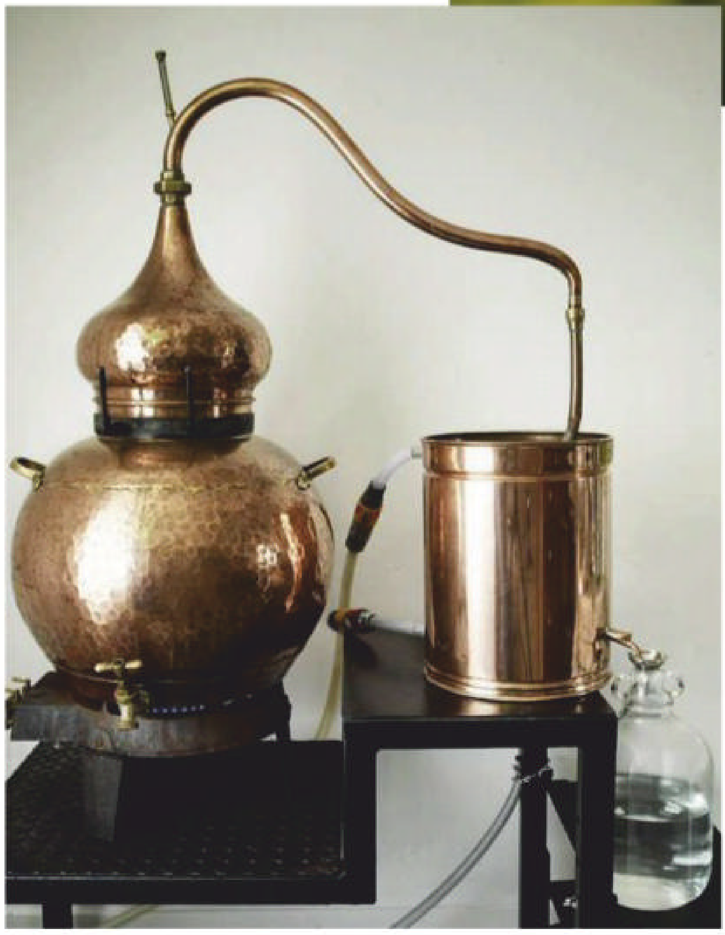

Clockwise from top left

***Rosa* x *damascena* 'Kazanlik' named for the Bulgarian town** Kazanlak on the eastern side of the area known as Rose Valley, where around half of the world's attar of roses oil is produced.

Denise stirs the roses and water in the still's pot with a large wooden spoon.

After distillation, the rosewater is left to mature in a cool, dark barn before being bottled up.

A mix of roses and spring water is heated in the still's copper pot on the left. The steam from this process is then cooled and condensed in the cylinder vessel on the right and collected in demijohns as rosewater.

▷ *damascena* 'Kazanlik', a pale-pink rose that takes its name from a town in the Valley of Roses in Bulgaria where much of the world's rose oil is produced. It has the strongest fragrance of the three and is ideal for use in cooking.

These three roses are used to produce the Petals of the Valley range of rosewaters, and all are available as 30ml or 100ml bottles. The company also produces two room and pillow sprays: one that combines the white and apothecary rose, and another that has had a small amount of lavender added into it. Because they make the rosewater in such a natural way, it isn't a heavy scent that hangs around, as Denise says: "You spray it, engage with it and then it's gone." The whole process is very eco-conscious. Solar panels generate electricity to power the freezer, the slush left from the distilling process is composted, and the rosewater bottles are recyclable.

They sell all over the world, to customers who love the high oil content in their rosewater. Many use it for cooking – Desdemona uses rosewater to flavour her Welsh cakes – but a large proportion find it useful as a beauty product, combining the water with moisturiser or as an ointment for skin complaints. Both Denise and Desdemona agree that receiving happy comments from their customers is the best part of what they do. "Producing something that is so associated with love in real terms, it's such a reward," says Denise. "And that's what it's all about." ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Petals of the Valley, Tregout Farm, Crossway, nr Newcastle, Monmouth NP25 5NS.
Tel 01600 750294, petalsofthevalley.co.uk

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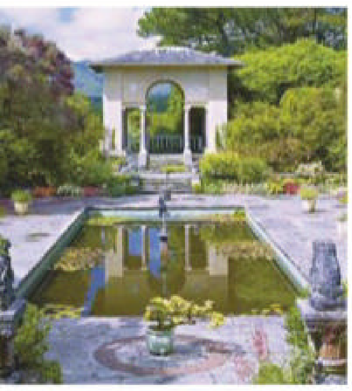


OPERA & GARDENS IN THE KINGDOM OF KERRY

A six night escorted visit to the beautiful Parknasilla Resort – 1st to 7th June 2020

Join us at the beautiful Parknasilla Resort on the 'Ring of Kerry' for a week of marvellous scenery, splendid gardens and uplifting music. All the best ingredients are here; magical scenery, gardens at their early summer best, opera performances in stunning settings and warm Irish hospitality in one of Ireland's most renowned hotels.

Together with our good friends at London Festival Opera we can offer seven days of absolute bliss. There will be time to relax and enjoy the hotel's excellent facilities as well as guided trips to some of Kerry's and West Cork's famous gardens. We will explore the 'Ring of Kerry' and drive over the mountains to Bantry House and Gardens. Here after a guided tour of the gardens we will enjoy a performance by London Festival Opera in the grand setting of Bantry House. Other highlights will include a visit to Garnish Island in West Cork, and Muckross House by the Lakes of Killarney.

The Itinerary in Brief

Day 1 London to Cork, Ireland. Fly by scheduled flight. Drive to the Parknasilla Resort. Welcome drinks and dinner this evening.

Day 2 Derreen Gardens & Beara Peninsula. After breakfast depart on a morning drive to Derreen Gardens. Designed and planted by the fifth Marquis of Lansdowne in the 1870s, Derreen is famous for its tree ferns as well as azaleas and rhododendrons. Enjoy the magnificent views across Kilmackillogue Harbour to the Caha Mountains before we return to the hotel for a few hours of relaxation. In the late afternoon there will be a performance by London Festival Opera followed by afternoon tea.

Day 3 Derrynane House & Kenmare. This morning visit Derrynane House, the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell. The house is a museum commemorating one of Ireland's leading historical figures. In the afternoon a bus transfer will be provided to the local town of Kenmare for time to explore and shop at leisure.

Day 4 Lakes of Killarney & Muckross House. Morning excursion to the Killarney National Park and Muckross House. Tour the gardens and house which was once owned by the Herbert family who entertained Queen Victoria here in 1861. The setting by the lake shore with its mountain backdrop is stunning. Afternoon at leisure. In the late afternoon London Festival Opera will perform for us followed by afternoon tea.

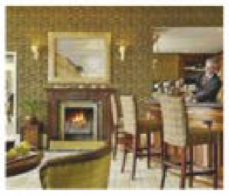
Day 5 Parknasilla Resort. It would be unforgivable to come to such a place as this and not have a complete day to enjoy the hotel and its extensive grounds.

Day 6 Garnish Island & Bantry House. Drive over the mountains to Bantry Bay on a full day excursion that will include a morning visit to Garnish Island and the beautiful Ilnacullin Gardens where the sheltered position and Gulf Stream is favourable to the growth of ornamental plants, many normally only found in sub-tropical or Mediterranean climates. Continue to Bantry House, overlooking Bantry Bay. We will explore the house, one of the finest historic houses in Ireland along with the gardens. After a light lunch, London Festival Opera will perform their farewell concert in one of the grand rooms.

Day 7 Cork to London. Transfer to the airport for your return scheduled flight to London.

Parknasilla Resort

Situated in 500 acres, Parknasilla Resort is located in the middle of some of Kerry's finest scenery. Here you will find interesting walks, tiny sandy coves and beach huts for those who wish to swim in the sea. Once a grand house, Parknasilla has grown gracefully into her life as a hotel. The ground floor of the original main house is where you will find a number of delightful sitting rooms, all offering wonderful views. Here also is the Pygmalion dining room where gourmet food is provided using many locally sourced fine meats and fish. The health spa with a magnificent swimming pool is a new addition and the views from the pool across the sea have to be seen to be believed.



Prices & Inclusions

Prices per person based on double occupancy start from **£2095**. Single prices from **£2495**.

What's Included:

- Economy class return scheduled air travel
- Six nights at the Parknasilla Resort with full Irish breakfast and dinner from a la carte menu daily
- Two afternoon teas at Parknasilla Resort
- Guided excursions
- Performances by London Festival Opera
- Tour manager
- Transfers
- Gratuities

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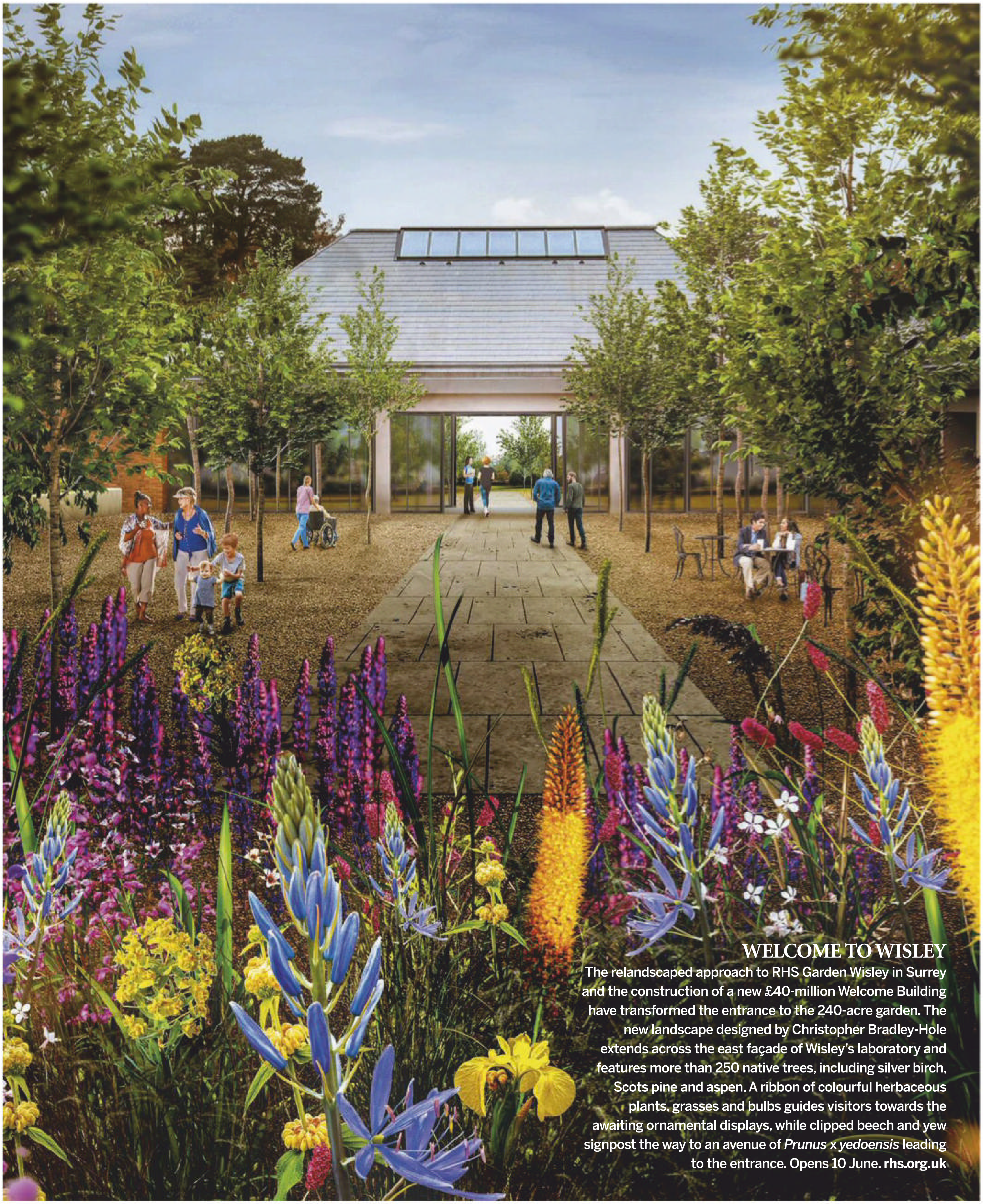

WELCOME TO WISLEY

The relandscaped approach to RHS Garden Wisley in Surrey and the construction of a new £40-million Welcome Building have transformed the entrance to the 240-acre garden. The new landscape designed by Christopher Bradley-Hole extends across the east façade of Wisley's laboratory and features more than 250 native trees, including silver birch, Scots pine and aspen. A ribbon of colourful herbaceous plants, grasses and bulbs guides visitors towards the awaiting ornamental displays, while clipped beech and yew signpost the way to an avenue of *Prunus x yedoensis* leading to the entrance. Opens 10 June. **rhs.org.uk**

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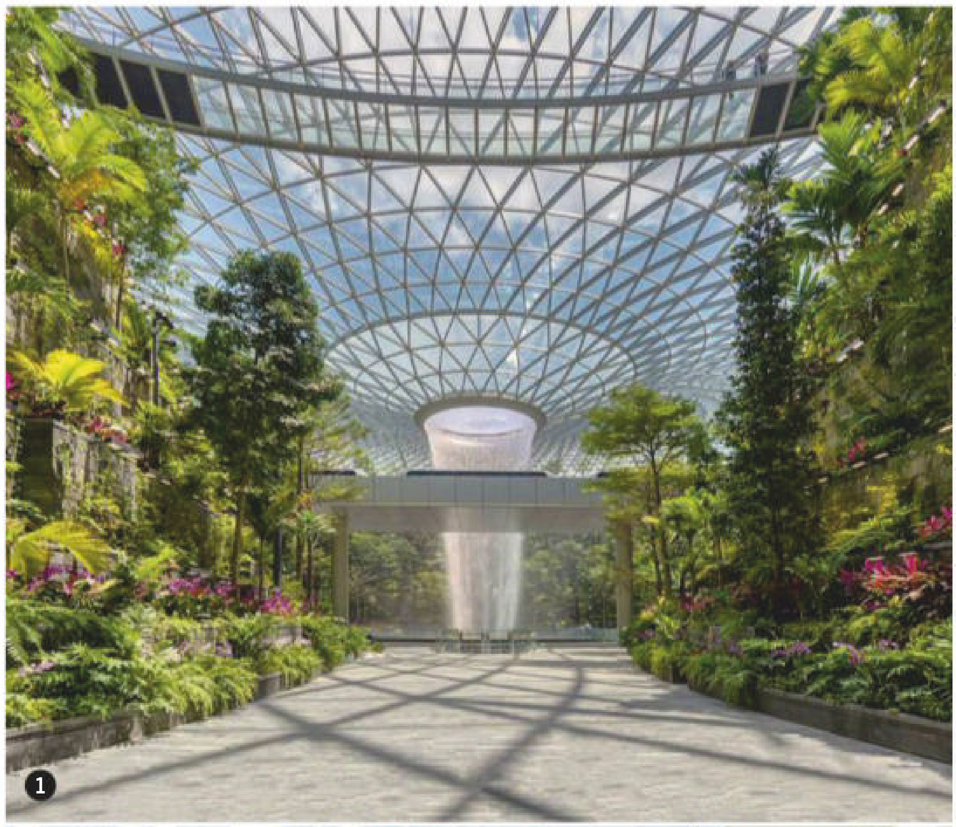
NEWS

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



① NEW DEPARTURE

Airport design has been revolutionised with the opening of Moshe Safdie's Jewel Changi Airport, in Singapore, which is flooded with light from its glass-domed roof above a climate-controlled indoor forest. An oxygenating waterfall, the world's tallest indoor cascade, falls seven storeys into the Forest Valley, bringing nature into the central hub that connects four terminals and offers more than 280 retail stores and eateries. Rainwater is funnelled into the waterfall, providing hydration for the terraced forest garden and the building's services. The garden can be viewed from different levels, including a glass-bottomed bridge on the fifth level. **safdiearchitects.com**

② BIOPHILIC DESIGN

The restorative effect of indoor plants on our health and comfort was the inspiration behind the design of a new store in Brooklyn, New York, owned by botanic design and installation company Greenery NYC. Billed as the world's first biophilic design store, Greenery Unlimited sells indoor plants and plant equipment and displays plants in a range of eye-catching ways, from floor to ceiling. A large living wall covers the space behind the reception desk, while a free-standing seating unit has an integrated planter that supports a mature *Ficus* tree underplanted with ferns and other evergreens. **greeneryunlimited.com**

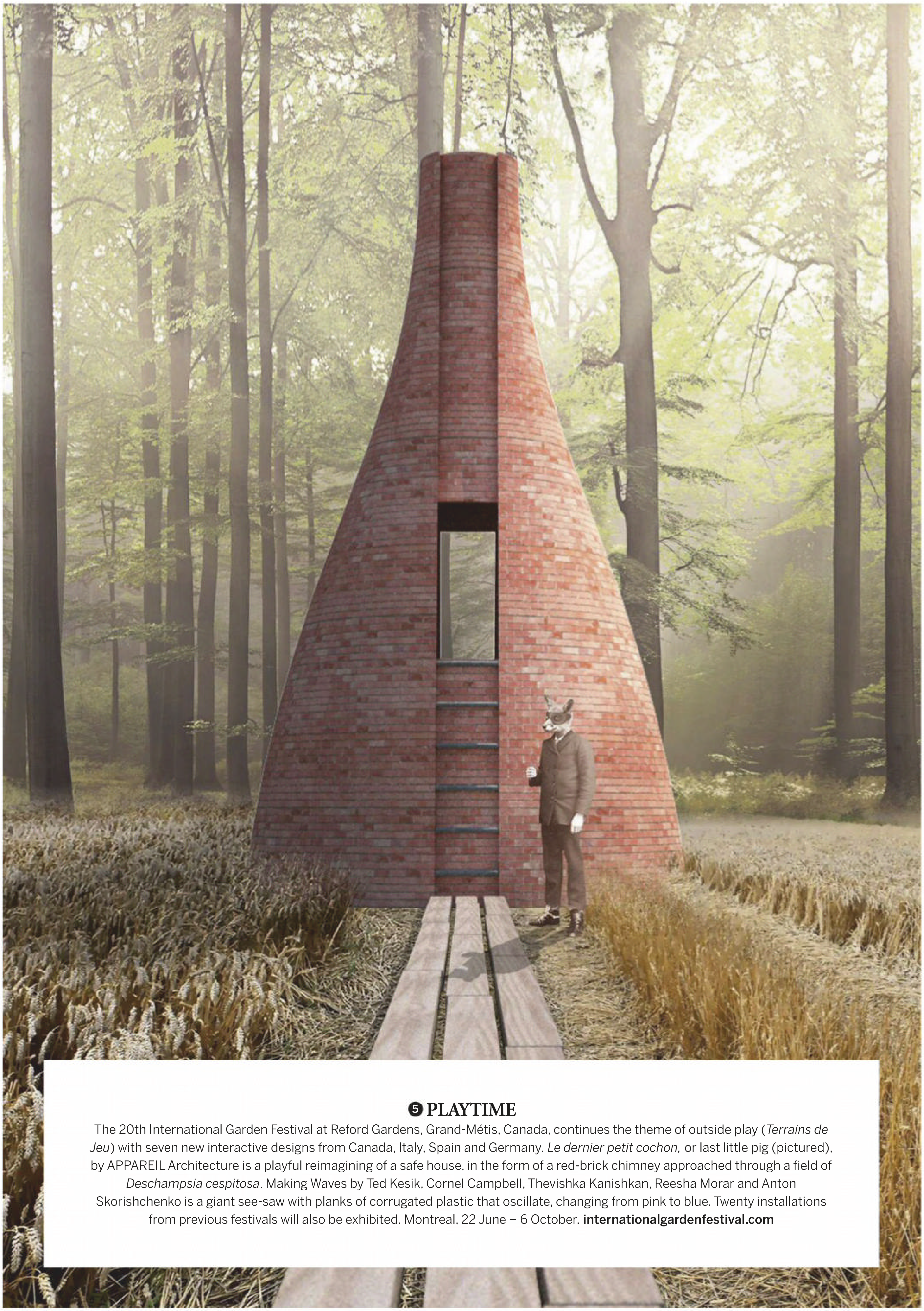
③ LEAFY GREEN

The design for a new glasshouse that will be a key component in the £70-million Edinburgh Biomes project at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has been submitted for planning approval. The curving, leaf-shaped glasshouse, designed by Nicoll Russell Studios, will create a dramatic starting point for the new Glasshouse Experience where visitors can explore the plant canopies via sloping walkways, culminating at the top level in views across the garden's treetops. A living wall will cover the façade of the existing Herbarium, which adjoins the glasshouse, with a cascading water feature that can be experienced from both sides. **rbge.org.uk**

④ DESIGN FOR LIFE

A scheme for the redevelopment of Portsmouth's former HM Prison Kingston has been granted planning permission. With a masterplan by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios and landscaping by Grant Associates, the scheme remodels the prison's cell wings, chapel and infirmary for residential use, with low-rise apartment blocks added to the edges of the site. Enclosed courtyard gardens reference the radial geometry of the original layout, with rain gardens that capture run-off from pavements and roofs lining the perimeter of a central garden square. Extensive tree planting will frame views throughout the site. **fcbstudios.com**

JEWEL CHANGI AIRPORT DEVT, BRAD DICKSON



⑤ PLAYTIME

The 20th International Garden Festival at Reford Gardens, Grand-Métis, Canada, continues the theme of outside play (*Terrains de Jeu*) with seven new interactive designs from Canada, Italy, Spain and Germany. *Le dernier petit cochon,* or last little pig (pictured), by APPAREIL Architecture is a playful reimagining of a safe house, in the form of a red-brick chimney approached through a field of *Deschampsia cespitosa*. Making Waves by Ted Kesik, Cornel Campbell, Thevishka Kanishkan, Reesha Morar and Anton Skorishchenko is a giant see-saw with planks of corrugated plastic that oscillate, changing from pink to blue. Twenty installations from previous festivals will also be exhibited. Montreal, 22 June – 6 October. **internationalgardenfestival.com**

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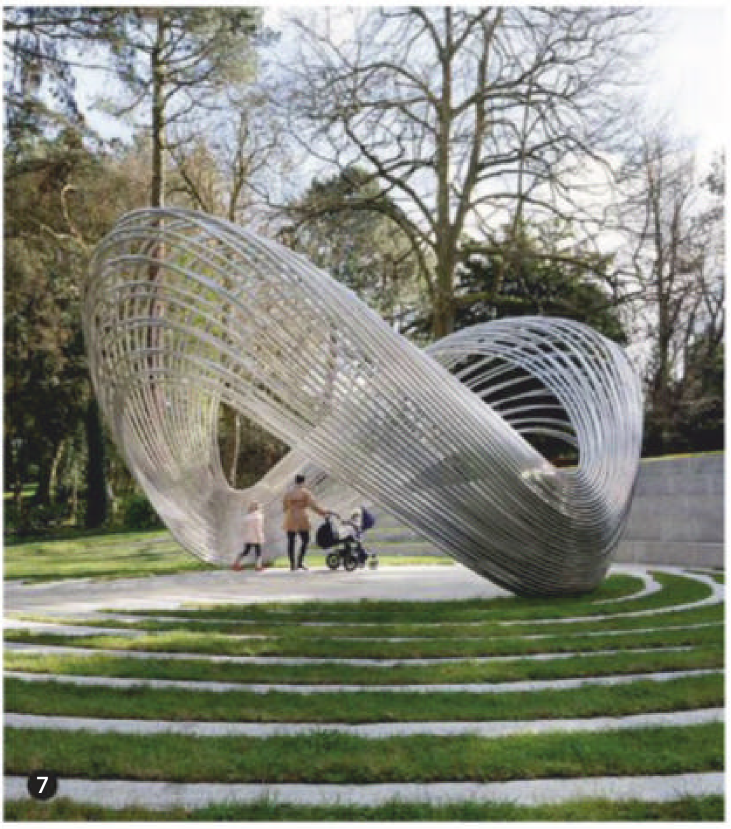

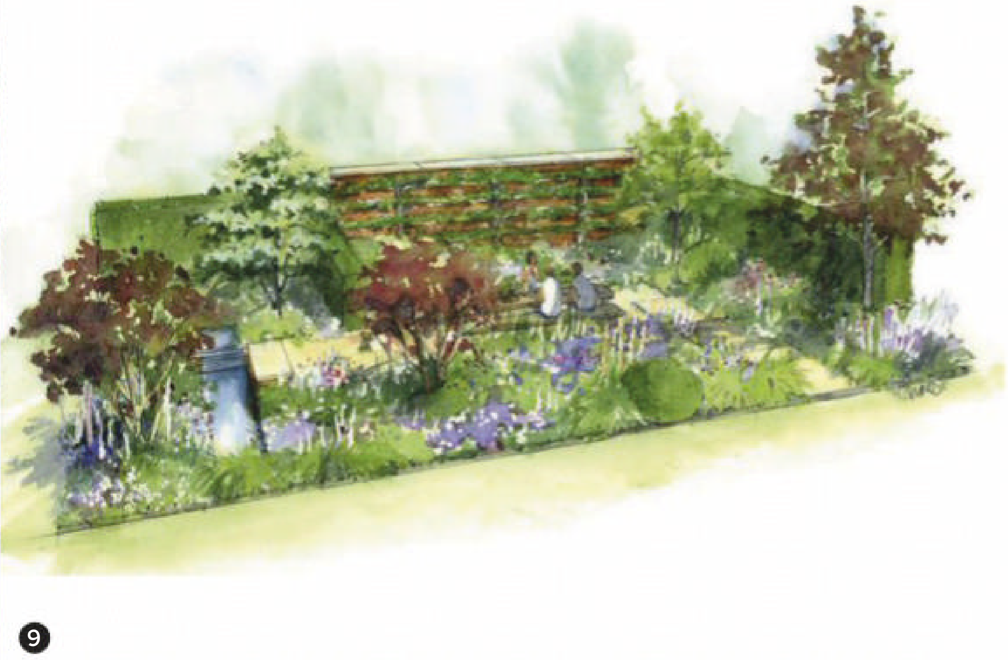

⑥ YORKSHIRE BORN

Future Park, an innovative scheme for a £250-million agri-food park with restaurants, food outlets and farm on the shores of an existing lake near Knaresborough in Yorkshire, has won Best Futura Mega Project at the MIPIM international property awards 2019. Designed by architects Bond Bryan, the low, linear building with a vegetated roof blends with the undulating surroundings and was inspired by the Yorkshire landscape. The sustainable, energy-efficient scheme will be run by Italian food-hall chain Eataly, and is due to be submitted for planning approval this month. **bondbryan.co.uk**

⑦ RIPPLE EFFECT

The Sousse and Bardo Memorial commemorating the 31 British people killed by terrorists in Tunisia in 2015 has been installed in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Designed by George King Architects with landscaping by Price & Myers, the dramatic memorial has as its centrepiece a stainless steel sculpture, Infinite Wave, shaped from 31 individual pieces of tube, each with its own path, that flow together to create a single form. When viewed diagonally, the form creates the mathematical symbol of infinity. Concentric circles of stone and grass rippling out from the sculpture continue the theme of water. **georgekingarchitects.com**

⑧ SUPREME SCHEME

A communal courtyard garden for a residential development in southwest London took the Supreme Winner Award at the Association of Professional Landscapers Awards 2019 for London-based Kingston Landscape Group. The south-facing garden, enclosed on three sides by apartment blocks, extends across two levels, linked by an external staircase. Structure is provided by semi-mature trees that are underplanted with scented plants, herbs and thousands of spring bulbs. Corten steel is used for seating and as edging for borders and for three water features. **aplawards.co.uk**

⑨ SHOW DEBUT

RHS Ambassador Jamie Butterworth is designing his first show garden for Wedgwood the headline show partner at this year's RHS Chatsworth Flower Show. Taking inspiration from the Wedgwood founder's son John Wedgwood's personal garden in Gloucestershire, the garden will be a tapestry of shrubs such as *Fagus sylvatica* Atropurpurea Group, *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* and roses, with herbs and cottage-garden favourites such as sweet peas and veronicas. Other highlights of the show include the RHS Wildlife Garden and a Power of Trees feature aimed at encouraging gardeners to plant more trees. 5-9 June. **rhs.org.uk/shows**

PAUL UPWARD PHOTOGRAPHY

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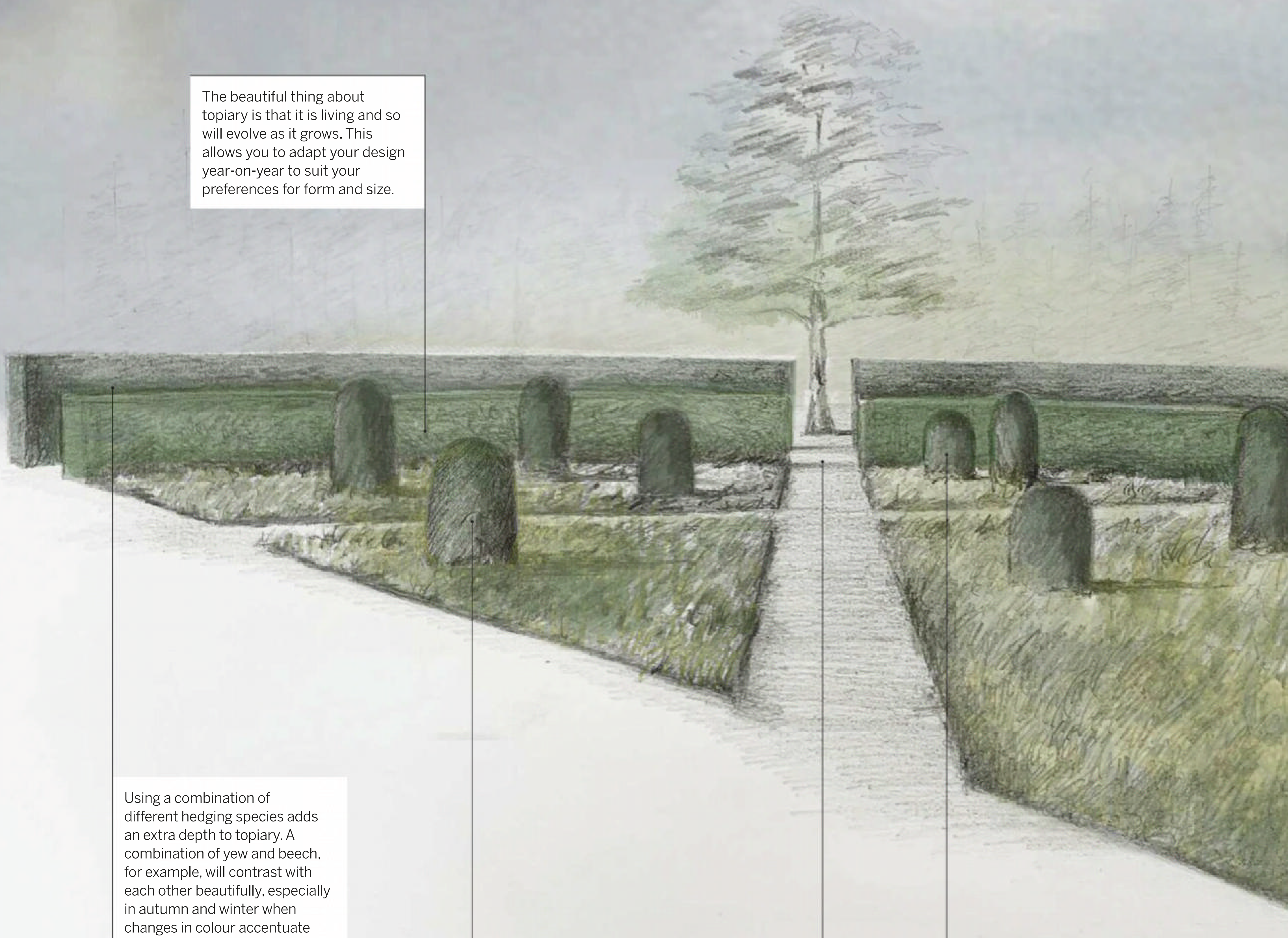
LIVING WORKS OF ART

Whether you create your own or buy a ready-formed piece, topiary will enhance any garden style, says designer Matt Keightley

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION **MATT KEIGHTLEY**



The beautiful thing about topiary is that it is living and so will evolve as it grows. This allows you to adapt your design year-on-year to suit your preferences for form and size.

Using a combination of different hedging species adds an extra depth to topiary. A combination of yew and beech, for example, will contrast with each other beautifully, especially in autumn and winter when changes in colour accentuate differences in foliage texture.

Even simple topiary forms, such as these beehive-shaped columns create sculptural forms that punctuate the landscape.

Flanking hedges can be used both to frame a view and to envelop a space, helping to draw the user's eye across the width of a garden. Using a stepped approach, with two hedges, adds depth and level of intrigue.

Repeating a shape of topiary through a scheme is a restrained and incredibly effective approach to structural planting in a garden. It could be columns, such as these, or something as simple as a ball or low-level dome.

Matt Keightley is an award-winning designer and two-time winner of the People's Choice Award at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. He is head designer at London-based landscaping firm Rosebank.

There is something mesmerising about topiary. The geometry of low hedges, the intricacy of patterned parterres or the anchoring structure of individual shapes can all give your garden a new dimension. For me, topiary is hugely versatile. It is the perfect complement to classic Georgian architecture or to the contained symmetry of a Victorian city terrace. It is an essential element of a formal Italianate garden, but is equally at home in a bucolic Arts and Crafts setting – imagine Great Dixter without its peacocks – or a contemporary country garden, where key pieces can be used to anchor an expansive perennial planting scheme. I invariably tuck a few significant pieces of topiary into all the gardens I design, whether they are in town or in the country.

It is true that this is one garden feature that comes at a significant cost, in terms of both time and money, but it is a worthwhile investment, which has a habit of turning into an obsession. I get much pleasure from clipping my topiary into shape at the start of the season, knowing it will continue to look great for months.

If you want to buy a ready-formed piece, most nurseries can supply a range of classic shapes – domes, balls, spirals, cones and cubes – with prices starting at around £30 for the smallest and simplest examples, then rising rapidly. Container-grown plants will be available all year round, but, from November to March, specialist nurseries will also have a wide range of shapes and sizes available as root-ball specimens so this is the optimum time to buy.

Alternatively, creating your own topiary can be tremendously satisfying if you are prepared to wait a few years for it to take shape – although if you plant nine young beech plants to a square metre, they will form a fashionable cube surprisingly quickly. This DIY option is also cost-effective, and gives you complete freedom to make any shape that takes your fancy. If you need a bit of guidance, however, you can buy all sorts of frames that will give you a template to cut to.

I INVARIABLY TUCK A FEW SIGNIFICANT PIECES OF TOPIARY INTO ALL OF THE GARDENS I DESIGN

PLACE THAT PLANT

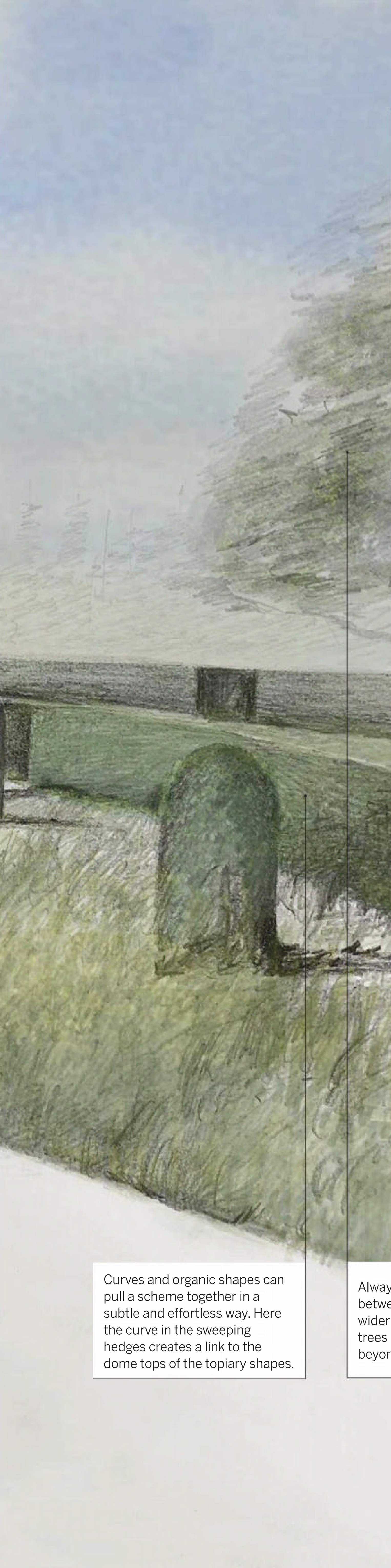
Whichever route you chose to take, it's worth giving as much thought to which plant your topiary will be grown from as to what form it will take. Box is off the menu these days, because pests and fungal disease (notably box blight) are such a problem, but there are a number of very good alternatives.

Yew, beech and hornbeam are my all-time favourites, but I also use *Ilex crenata*, *Lonicera nitida* and various pittosporums. *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum' is a good all-rounder, deep-purple *P. tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb' is a nice choice for a different colour, and *P. tenuifolium* 'Golf Ball', as its name suggests, will make a nice, tight, rounded shape. *Euonymus japonicus* 'Green Rocket' can be an interesting choice for upright shapes, and at home I grow *Rosmarinus officinalis* clipped as a dome.

Like any plant choice, you need to give some consideration to site and aspect. Both yew and hornbeam will cope with a range of light levels but hate to have their roots wet, so on heavy soils you should dig in a free-draining medium before planting. At the other end of the spectrum, a thin, light soil may not offer enough goodness for your topiary to grow well, although in this situation rosemary could be a bit more forgiving than some of the more traditional options.

Whatever you choose, remember that it will be a year-round structure. Even a deciduous piece will retain a strong skeletal ▷

To continue turn to page 114



Curves and organic shapes can pull a scheme together in a subtle and effortless way. Here the curve in the sweeping hedges creates a link to the dome tops of the topiary shapes.

Always consider the interaction between your garden and the wider landscape. Here a pair of trees add a focus and frame beyond the perimeter hedging.

AS TOLD TO JODIE JONES

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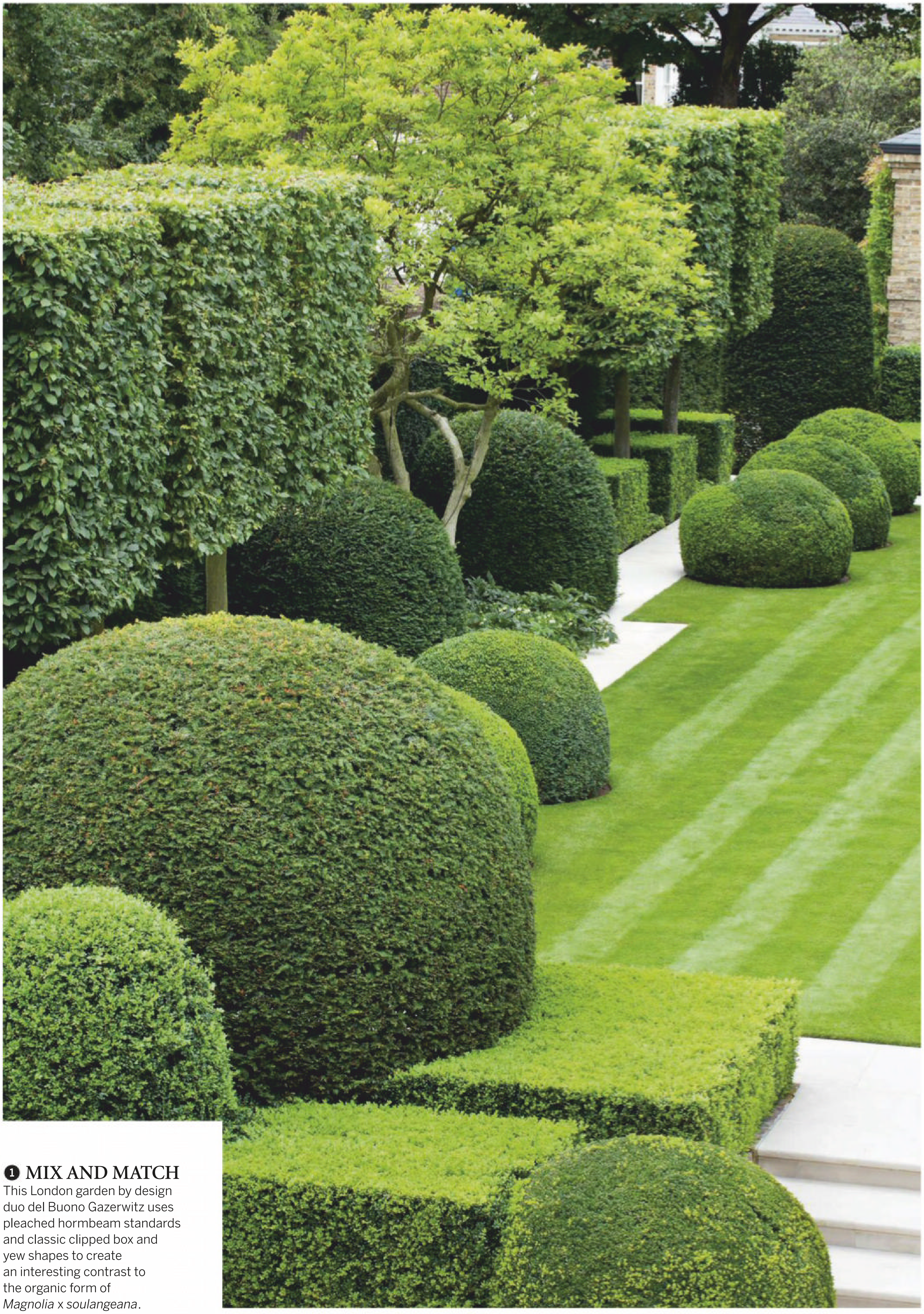


1 MARIANNE MAJERUS. DESIGN DEL BUONO GAZERWITZ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

① MIX AND MATCH
This London garden by design duo del Buono Gazerwitz uses pleached hormbeam standards and classic clipped box and yew shapes to create an interesting contrast to the organic form of *Magnolia* x *soulangeana*.

▷ presence through winter (and some, especially beech, will hold on to their autumn foliage right up until the new leaves emerge in spring). This means you need to consider how it will look rising up out of an empty flowerbed every bit as much as how it will look in high summer surrounded by exuberant planting. With its dense shape and generally dark colour, a piece of topiary will be a strong visual anchor at any time of year.

This is a large part of the appeal of topiary. I like to use pieces to emphasise axis points, provide a visual link from one part of the garden to another, or emphasise the underlying geometry of a design. If budgets are tight, I may put the piece in a complementary style of container, which instantly doubles its impact.

RULES OF THUMB

The single most important way to maximise the impact of topiary is to keep it immaculately clipped. When, and how often, you need to do this will be dictated by the choice of plant. Books will tell you that yew needs clipping twice a year, in spring and late autumn, but cutting more often will give an even better finish. Hornbeam and yew should be cut at the end of summer, although you could also do this in late spring after the nesting season is over. *Lonicera nitida* tends to grow rapidly and needs to be clipped several times a year, whereas *Ilex crenata* is fairly woody, slow-growing and unlikely to need more than a single annual clip. *Pittosporum* should be cut back just after flowering, if you want it to flower again next year, and *Euonymus* can be cut whenever it needs it, although it is best to avoid the hottest months.

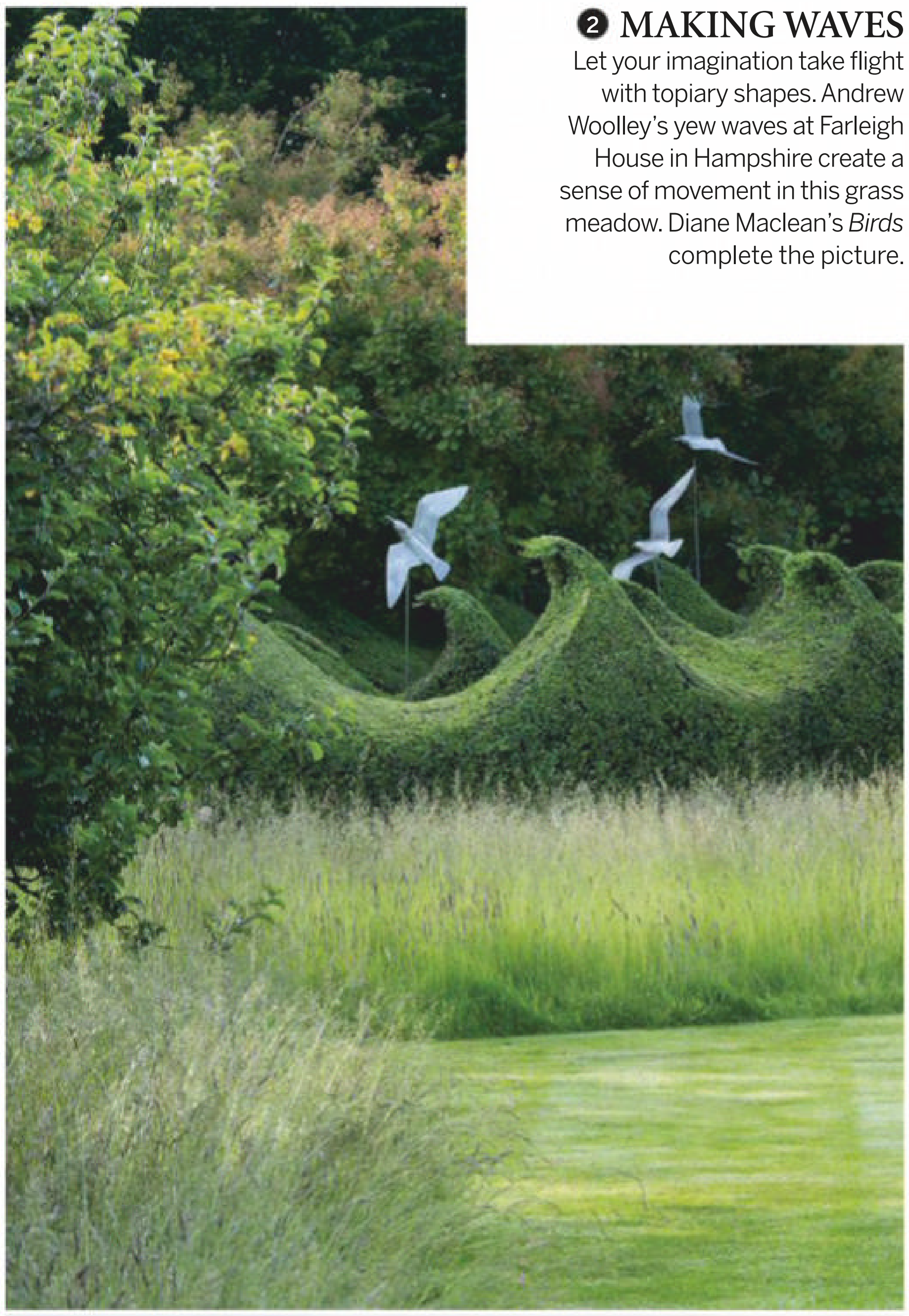
THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO MAXIMISE THE IMPACT OF TOPIARY IS TO CLIP IT WELL

It is essential to use clean, sharp tools. I regularly disinfect and sharpen the blades on my clippers while I work, and again when I put them away. Otherwise it is all too easy to transfer problems from one plant to another, or make ragged cuts that allow infection to take hold. Hedge cutters also need regular disinfecting, and if you are serious about your topiary you should look out for special models, generally sold to professionals, which have twice the number of teeth to give a finer cut.

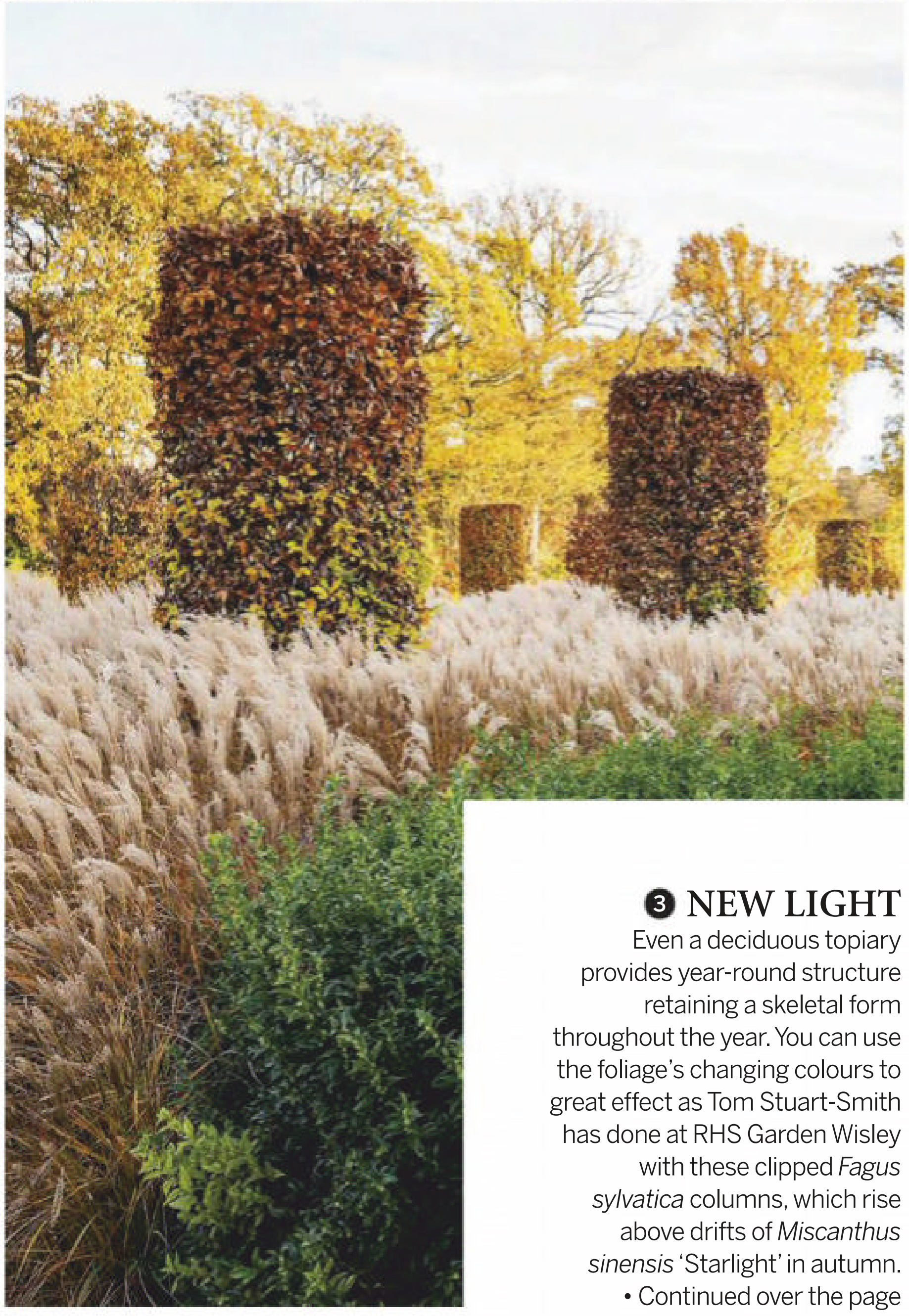
Doing a good job is a time-consuming process, so find comfortable tools you are confident in using, and if you need a bit of height, invest in a tripod ladder, which will allow you to get close without damaging the surrounding planting. Lay dust sheets around the base of the piece you are going to work on, which makes it easy to clear away the clippings when you have finished.

If you have never cared for topiary before, making those first cuts can be a bit daunting. It's a good idea to go easy on yourself and start with balls and domes, which are the simplest shapes to trim. The trick is to hold the blades close to the surface and work your way smoothly over the shape, regularly stepping back and walking around to check on your progress. Conventional wisdom is that you should assess twice and cut once, then look from a distance before coming back and doing it again if necessary. Pruning isn't over just because the shape is finished. Go back three days later and remove any little clippings you missed first time around, which will now be easy to spot because they will have started to fade.

Feed and water your trimmed topiary, then sit back, relax and look forward to enjoying a little piece of perfection for many months to come. □



❷ MAKING WAVES
Let your imagination take flight with topiary shapes. Andrew Woolley's yew waves at Farleigh House in Hampshire create a sense of movement in this grass meadow. Diane Maclean's *Birds* complete the picture.



❸ NEW LIGHT
Even a deciduous topiary provides year-round structure retaining a skeletal form throughout the year. You can use the foliage's changing colours to great effect as Tom Stuart-Smith has done at RHS Garden Wisley with these clipped *Fagus sylvatica* columns, which rise above drifts of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Starlight' in autumn.

• Continued over the page

2 MARIANNE MAJERUS. DESIGN ANDREW WOOLLEY.
3 MARIANNE MAJERUS. DESIGN TOM STUART-SMITH.

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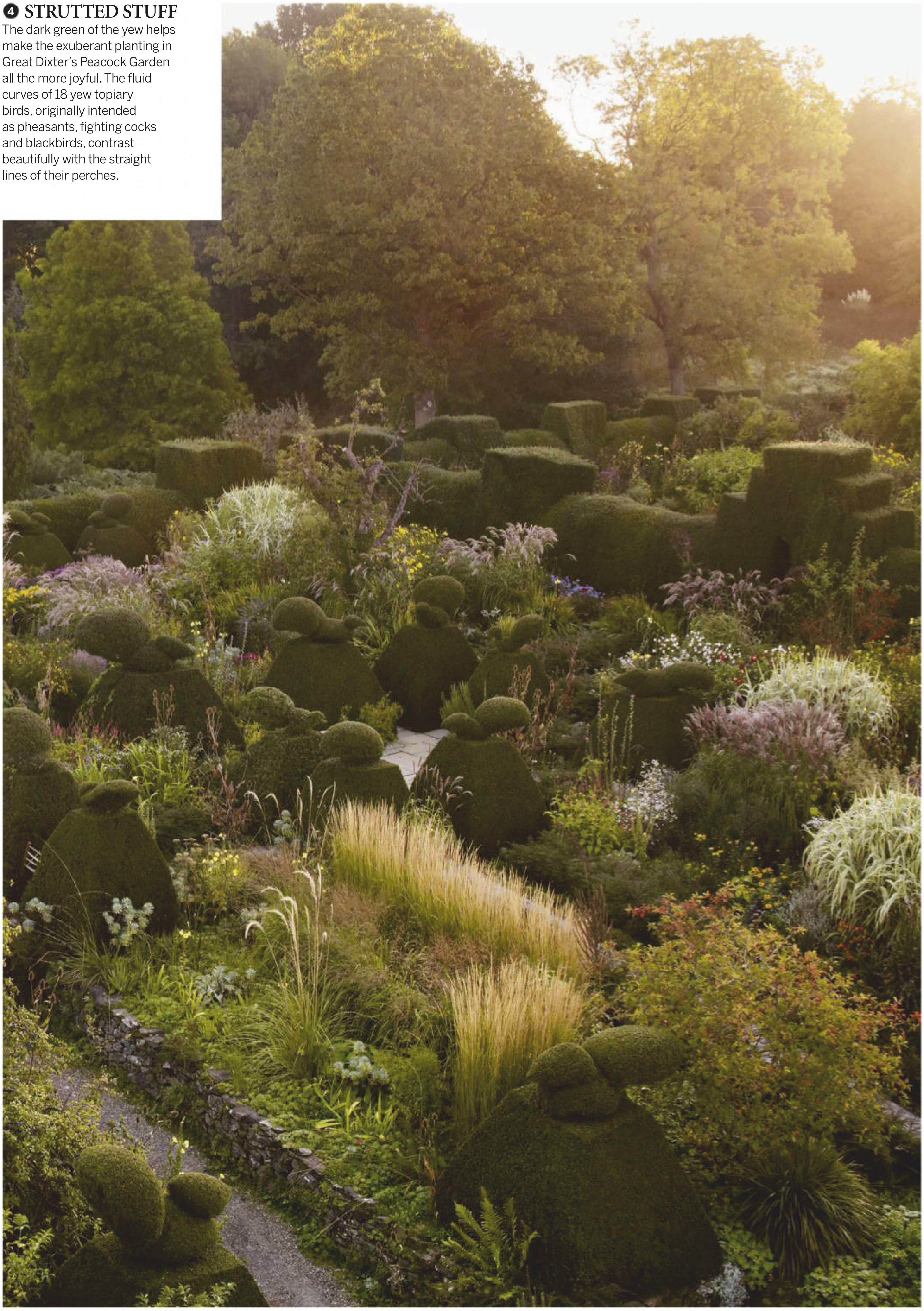
❹ STRUTTED STUFF

The dark green of the yew helps make the exuberant planting in Great Dixter's Peacock Garden all the more joyful. The fluid curves of 18 yew topiary birds, originally intended as pheasants, fighting cocks and blackbirds, contrast beautifully with the straight lines of their perches.



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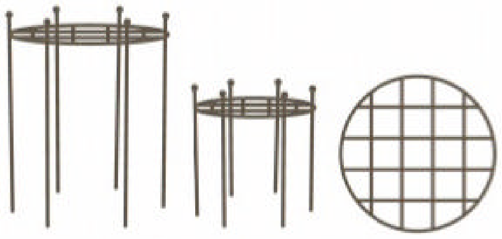

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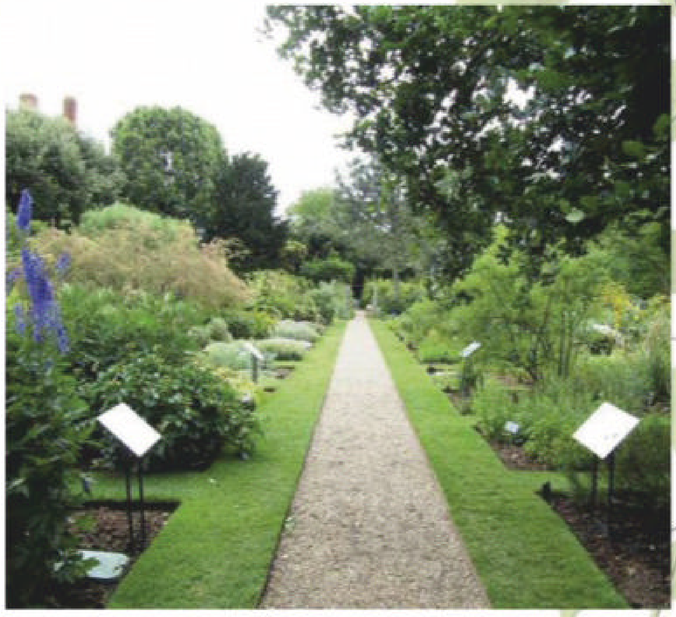

Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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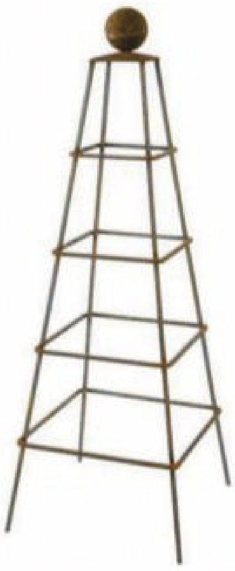
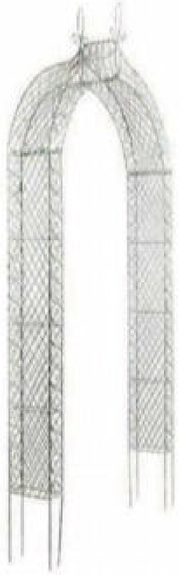
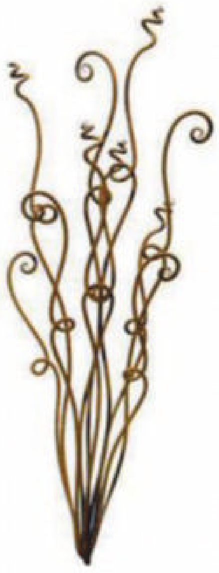


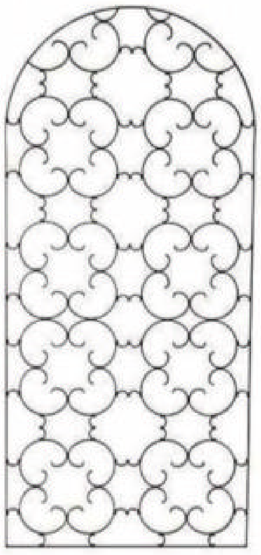
CRISP ANGLES
Abinger Obelisk, medium,
H200cm, £285, Muntons,
01285 706511, muntons.net



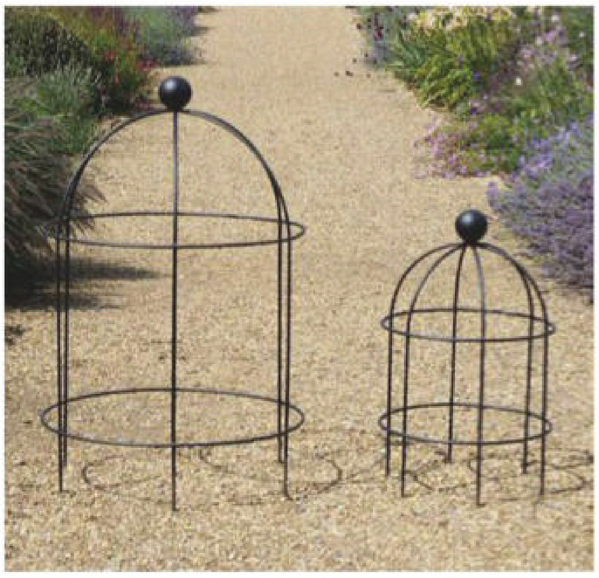
VICTORIAN STYLE
Ornate Green Wirework Garden Arch,
H263cm, £225, English Salvage,
01568 616205, englishsalvage.co.uk



FUNCTIONAL SCULPTURE
Fern Plant Support,
H180cm, £220, Straysparks,
07729 422657, straysparks.com



DELICATE VEIL
Fontenay Trellis Round Wide,
H222cm, £390, Garpa,
01273 486400, garpa.co.uk



SIMPLE SHAPE
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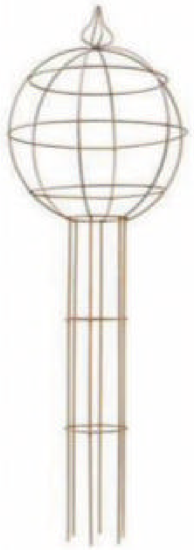

HEIGHT OF STYLE
Climbing Tower,
H180cm, £169.50, Leander,
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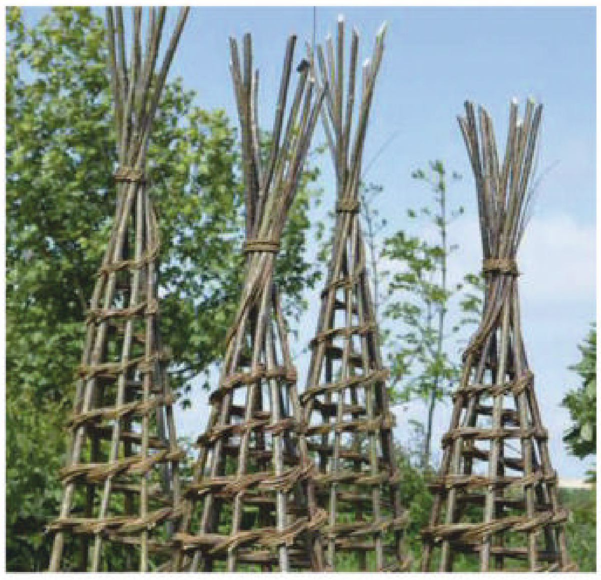

NATURAL CHOICE
Willow and Hazel Obelisks,
From H137cm, £27.50, Yorkshire Hurdles,
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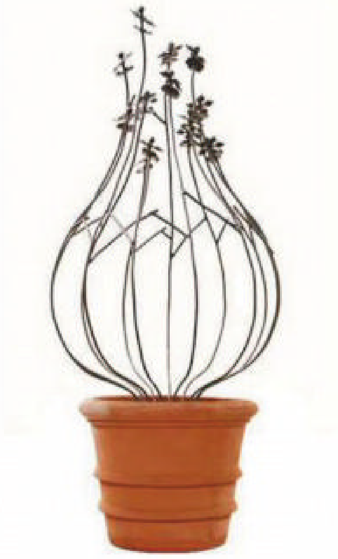
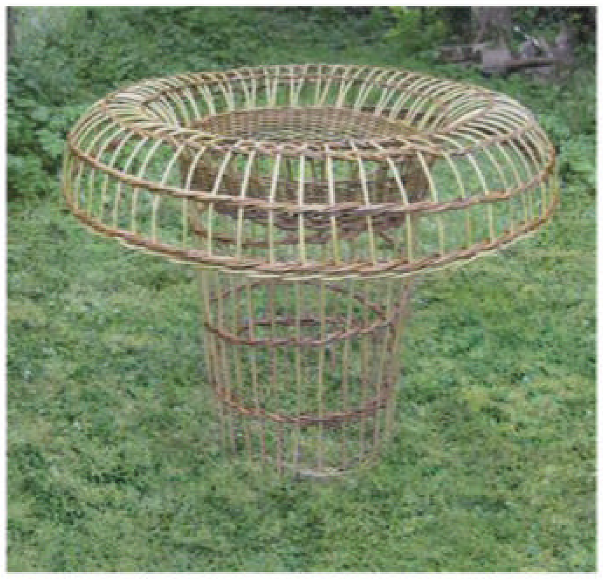


RUSTIC FINISH
Rusted Flower Globe,
H105cm, £385, Secret Gardens Furniture,
020 8464 5327, secretgardensfurniture.com



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NATURE'S PLAYGROUND

Tranquil valleys, palm-fringed lakes and the beautiful Alps await in Italian-speaking Ticino, one of Switzerland's most culturally and naturally diverse regions

Ticino really does have the best of both worlds. Its landscapes are as captivatingly pastoral as you'd expect from the Swiss Alps, but Vespa-lined piazzas, Baroque architecture and an abundance of fresh pasta and gelato await within the region's pastel towns.

Ticino's rich natural wonders will surprise you as much as its Italian heart. Public transport is the most effective way to discover them – you can climb on a cableway to hike the Alps in the morning, then hop on a bus and go for a refreshing swim in a lake by the afternoon.

The handy Ticino Ticket grants you free access to the region's comprehensive public transport network as well as discounts for some attractions. You should also download the free hikeTicino app, which provides details of more than 200 trails and walking routes. You'll find in-depth descriptions, the duration and difficulty level for each trail, as well as a height profile and interactive map.

These nifty resources make it extremely easy to explore Ticino on foot – there's no better way to get close to nature. Boasting 4,000km or so of footpaths and trails, the canton's mountains and valleys are a nature lover's paradise.

Here are three trails you shouldn't miss:

SAY CHEESE!

The Alps, Lake Lugano, Lake Varese and Lake Como can all be spotted from Monte Generoso's peak – another beautiful reminder of the region's links with Italy.

As if the views weren't enticing enough, this mountain is lined with Alpine farms, which have been producing regional cheeses for centuries. Among them is Marisa Clericetti's small dairy farm in the futuristic 'Fiore di pietra' building. Marisa has been treating hikers to her delicious formaggino cheese and unparalleled views of the Muggio valley for more than 40 years.

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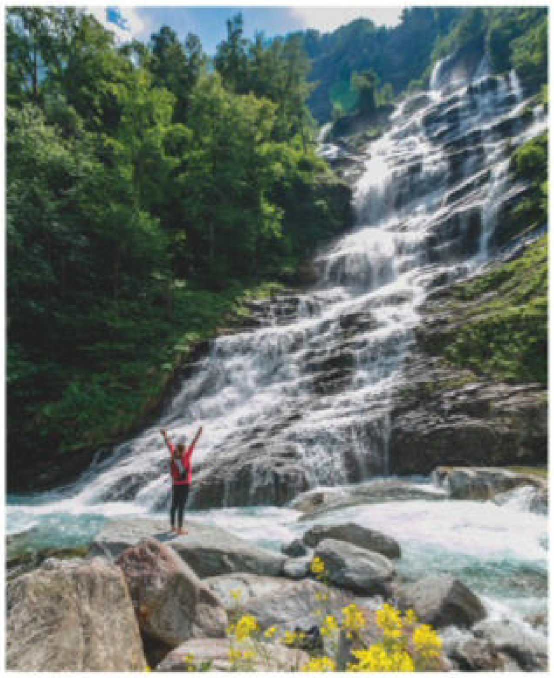
FOLLOW THE VALLEY

The hike across the striking Calnègia Valley will take you across a myriad of natural landscapes, from peaceful meadows and wondrous woods to tranquil gorges and a majestic waterfall.

There's much terrain to cover to get as close as possible to the thundering waterfall, but the journey really is the destination when it comes to the Calnègia Valley. Plus, you'll pass through Foroglio, a sleepy village entirely made up of rustic, stone cottages, complete with bright vegetable gardens and greenery at every turn.

– **TICINO.CH/HIKE11**



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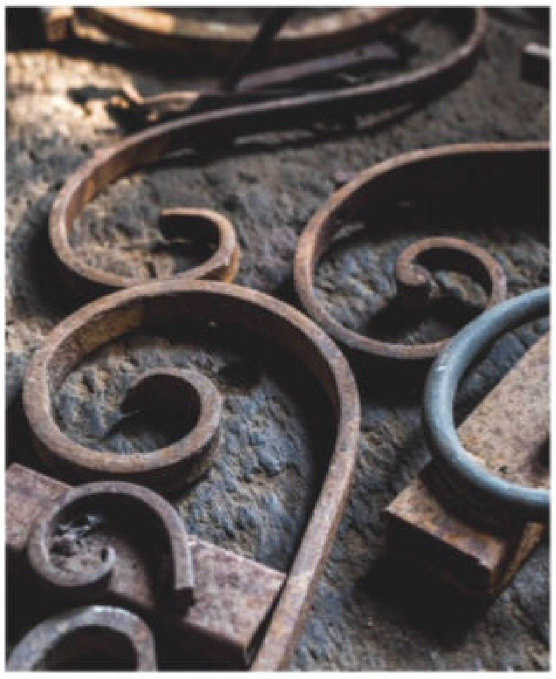

THE PATH OF MARVELS

With its abundance of historic mills, tilt hammers, furnaces, castles and dry-stone walls, hiking in the Malcantone region will whisk you back in time to ultimate pastoral bliss.

As well as striking landscapes, the trail also offers insight into the region's rich history. Following the valley will lead you down an ancient road linking Novaggio with Miglieglia, to a charming village where you can enjoy a dip in the river which runs alongside the family-friendly Maglio del Malcantone forge. It's a must if you're bringing children along for the journey.

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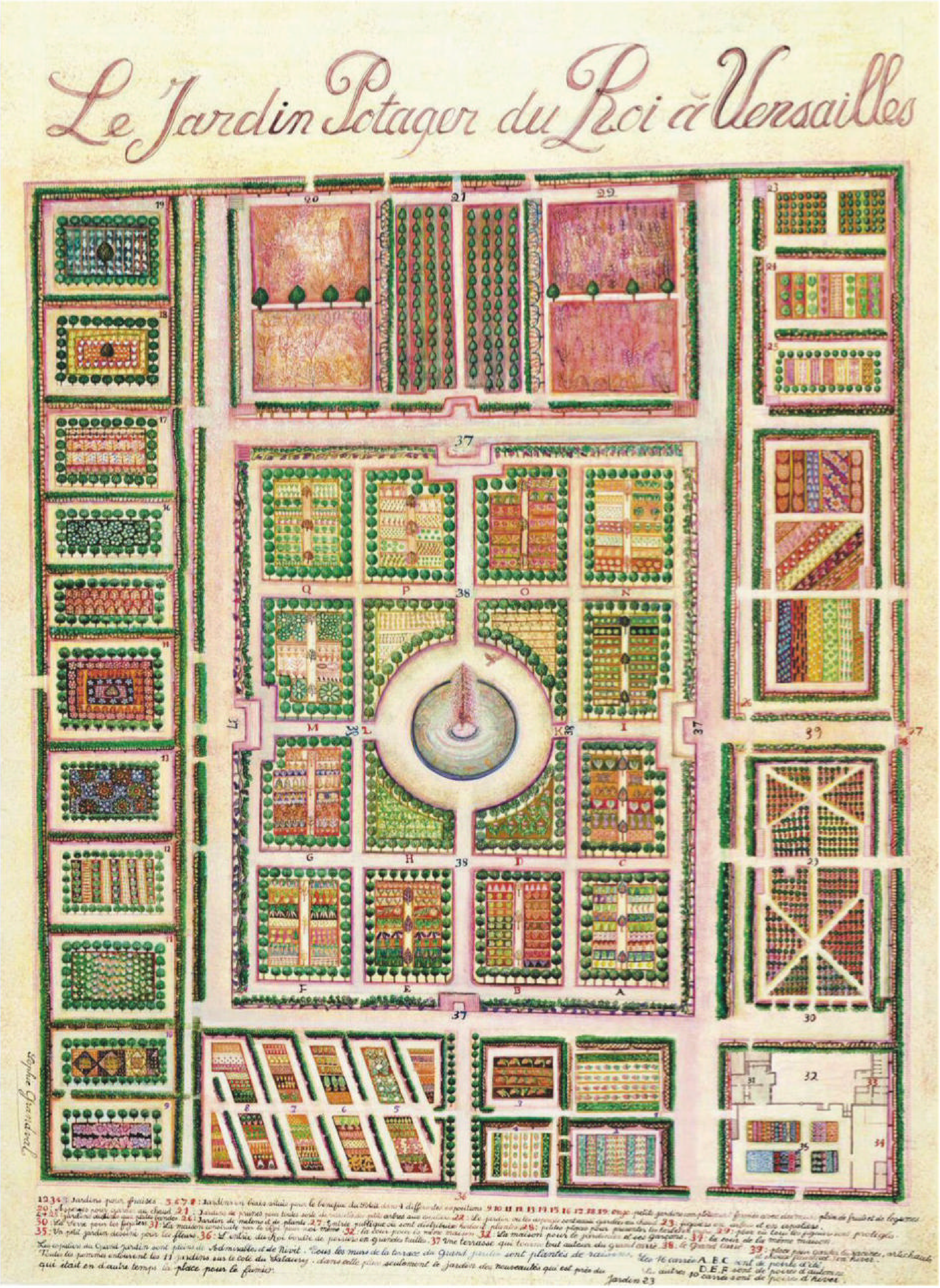
Le Jardin Potager du Roi à Versailles

Ink and watercolour plan of Louis XIV's vegetable garden at Versailles, showing the layout of fruit trees, as featured in *Orchard* (reviewed on page 126), which explores one of the oldest types of garden.

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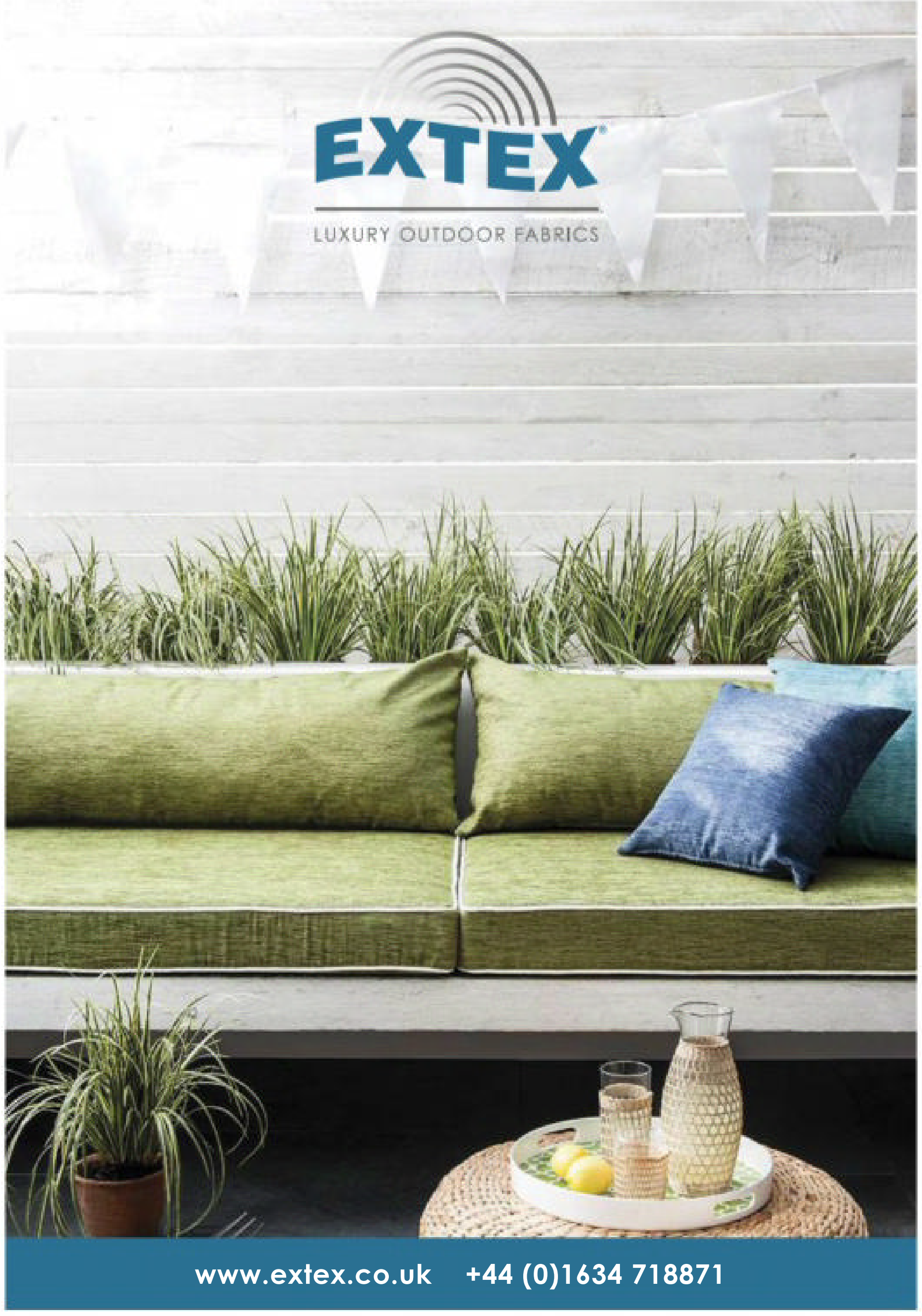

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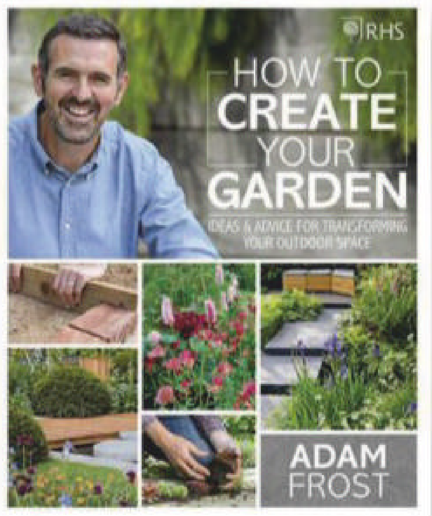
BOOK REVIEWS


RHS
HOW TO CREATE YOUR GARDEN
IDEAS & ADVICE FOR TRANSFORMING YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE
ADAM FROST

HOW TO CREATE YOUR GARDEN

by Adam Frost

DK, £20
ISBN 978-0241332313

A solidly reliable and practical guide to designing, constructing and maintaining your garden, written by an experienced gardener.

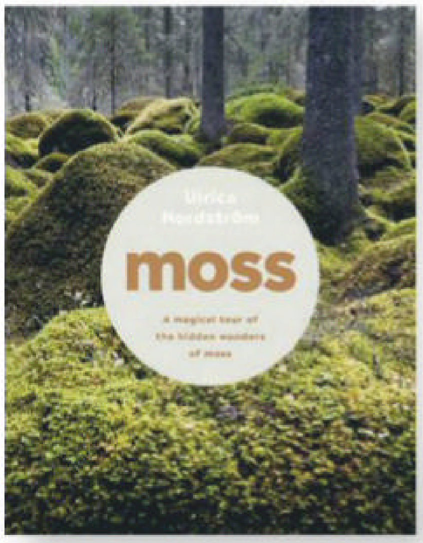
Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

Adam Frost knows a thing or two about creating gardens. Starting at 16 as an apprentice with the North Devon Parks Department, he now has his own landscaping business and garden design consultancy, picking up seven RHS Chelsea Flower Show Gold Medals along the way.

In this book he shares those years of expertise in an accessible guide for the enthusiastic novice, divided into sections entitled Design, Build and Enjoy. The section on construction is clearly explained and well-illustrated, enough to convince me that I am never going to lay a patio by myself, but if you are made of sterner stuff, you will find all you need to make a success of it. The section on aftercare is adequate, although it only skims the surface of a subject on which many volumes have already been written.

The section on design, however, is truly excellent. Here you will find all the usual practical pointers, and lots of glossy images of gardens designed by Adam (most of them show gardens, and therefore of a relatable size). But at the heart of this section is a series of border designs annotated with fascinating insights into Adam's thought processes, working from the high tree canopy, through mid-level shrubs to the perennial layer, which brings contrast, texture, movement, rhythm and seasonal colour, finishing off with seasonal bulbs.

Most amateur gardeners can produce a layout that works well enough, but it is the orchestration of planting for a balance of mass and void, shape and texture, repetition and focal points that sets a truly great garden apart. With the help of this book, the rest of us have a slightly better chance of producing something special for ourselves.



MOSS

by Ulrica Nordström

Michael Joseph, £14.99
ISBN 978-0241374474

A whistlestop tour of the magical world of mosses, from Scandinavian craft projects to the animacy of carpeted Japanese gardens.

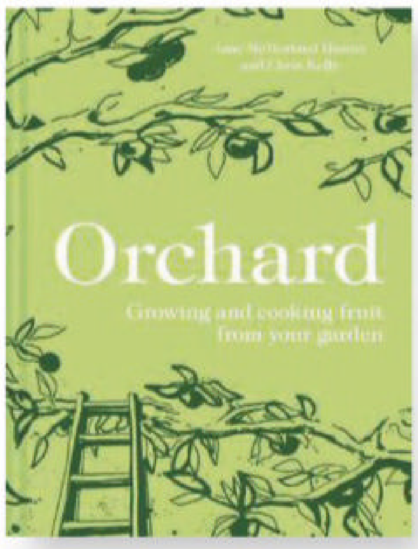
Reviewer Alys Fowler is a writer and horticulturist.

Humble moss, gently clothing damp spots in a verdant green with little ceremony or fuss. So easy to overlook, but evident everywhere, from polluted urban roofs to freshwater streams. This charming book invites you a step further than mere observance, to getting down on your knees and truly exploring the hidden world of moss.

The first half of the book teaches you how to identify moss, armed with a hand lens and spray bottle. There's a small but comprehensive field guide to common mosses before the book romps off around the world to meet bryophyte specialists, moss lovers and crafters. We meet Hisako Fujii, the author of a bestseller entitled *Mosses, My Dear Friends*, said to be one of the reasons why moss is such a hit with young Japanese people; a Swedish handcrafter who makes traditional door mats from moss; a scientist who specialises on the effects of climate change on moss; and numerous passionate gardeners. This is a worldwide tour of moss gardens, but there an emphasis on Japan, exploring the cultural and spiritual significance of moss in its traditional gardens.

The latter half of the book looks at growing projects. I thought this might be the least interesting section, imagining it would be dedicated to trendy terrariums and the like. Instead, it's a thorough guide to propagating and growing various species indoors and out. Who knew beer was the best medium for widescale moss propagation? The indoor section covers the ubiquitous terrariums, *kokedama* (Japanese moss balls) and *saikei* (the rocky counterpart to *bonsai* culture) in knowledgeable detail. It's a beautiful book, as happy on a coffee table as it might be on the potting bench.

BOOK REVIEWS



ORCHARD: GROWING AND COOKING FRUIT FROM YOUR GARDEN

by Jane McMorland Hunter
and Chris Kelly

Pavilion Books, £16.99
ISBN 978-1911624776

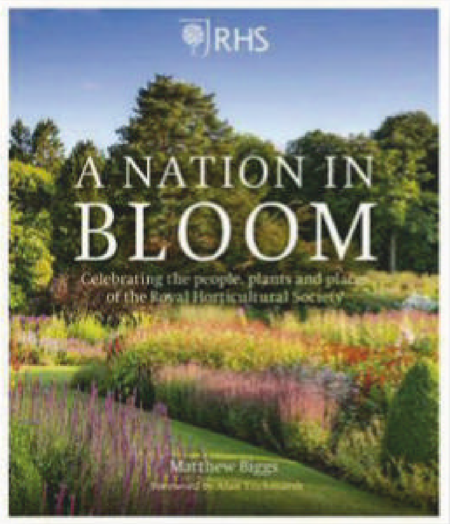
A comprehensive book covering the art and history of fruit trees as well as good practical advice on cultivation and orchard layout.

Reviewer Jojo Tulloh is a food and garden writer.

This book is much more of a scholarly read than the practical-sounding subtitle would suggest, and as such is filled with interesting facts about the development of orchards and their cultural significance. This is combined with sound, practical advice on design and cultivation, and romantic, inspirational photography and illustration.

The book begins with a well-researched introduction to the history of orchards, which tracks the progress of various fruits throughout the ages. It is interesting to see how the fate of an orchard (which needs long-term economic stability to thrive) depends on wider cultural and political events. Each fruit (apple, pear, quince, plum, cherry, medlar and mulberry) has its own chapter, tracking it individually through history, art and literature. Those chapters on the less common fruits, such as the mulberry, quince and medlar, are of particular interest. There is good advice on the design of orchards of every size, as well as how to grow fruit trees and which varieties to buy. We are also treated to two to three recipes per fruit. Sadly, there is no mention of forest gardens with underplanted orchards, but the odd oversight is perhaps inevitable with such a broad topic. Gardeners who like to travel to other gardens will enjoy the chapter detailing gardens with orchards to visit (both in this country and in Europe).

As a type of garden that has provided both beauty and utility for centuries, the orchard has huge emotional appeal. Published before, under the title *For the Love of an Orchard* (Pavilion, 2010), this book would be a good introduction to anyone thinking of planting their first.


RHS
A NATION IN BLOOM
Celebrating the people, plants and places of the Royal Horticultural Society
Matthew Biggs

A NATION IN BLOOM: CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE, PLANTS AND PLACES OF THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

by Matthew Biggs

White Lion, £30
ISBN 978-0711239357

Opening the doors to a British institution, this book reveals the purpose, work and ambitions of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Reviewer Agnes Stevenson is a garden writer.

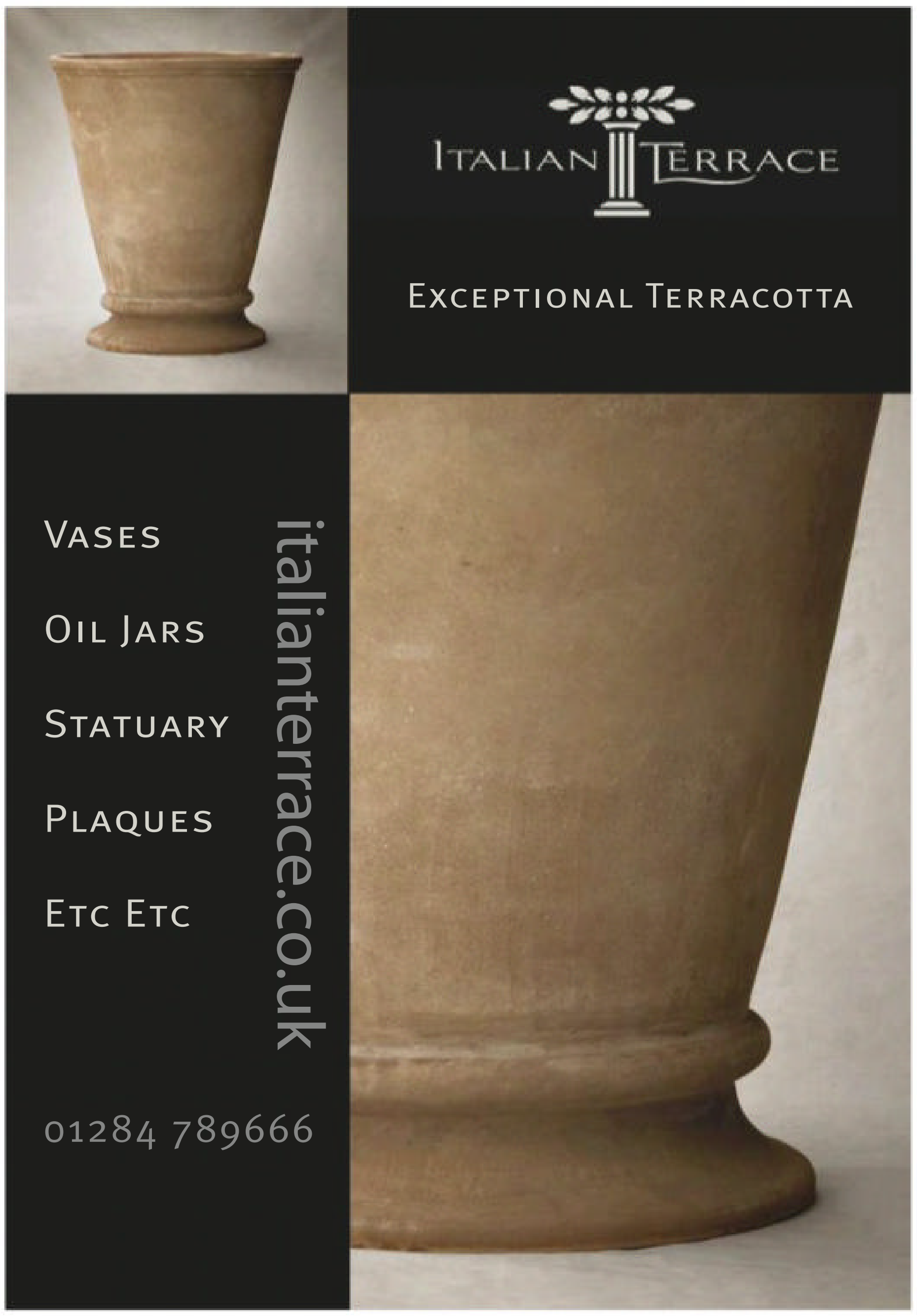
What is the RHS? It's a question that, until not so long ago, was relatively simple to answer. Then, becoming a member felt like joining an arcane society – dusty, secretive and a little bit thrilling. Now, with membership of more than half a million, it's a different story, and Matthew Biggs has set out to shed a light on an organisation that has spent the past decade reinventing itself. Only seven of the 256 pages are given over to the RHS's long history; the focus is rather on what the RHS is now and what it aims to achieve, and that purpose is conveyed with energy and conviction.

There's much to learn, from initiatives that take gardening into the heart of urban communities and the organisation's commitment to education, to major construction projects including the creation of RHS Garden Bridgewater, near Salford, Greater Manchester.

The photographs are as revealing as the words. That these include planting schemes and garden shots is to be expected, but there are many that show people of all ages, races and abilities in community gardens, cultivating inner-city plots or watering school gardens that have won RHS awards. If the organisation wanted to send out a message of inclusivity, these do the trick.

The shows are represented, too, but just as fascinating are the glimpses into the Field Research Facility and Herbarium, where issues such as climate change and species extinction are being tackled.

Today's Society would be unrecognisable to its founders, and getting here has been challenging (80 gardeners were made redundant during the 2009 financial crisis), but they would only have to read this book to know that the RHS is vigorous and flourishing.



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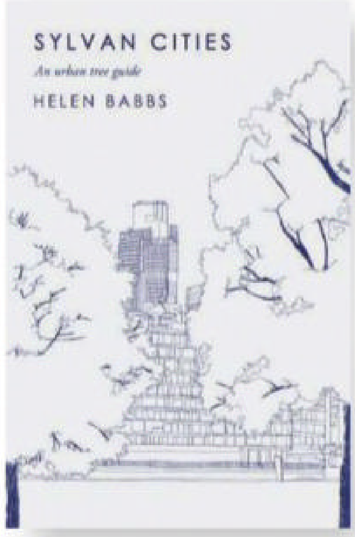
BOOK REVIEWS



SYLVAN CITIES:
AN URBAN TREE GUIDE
by Helen Babbs

Atlantic Books, £14.99
ISBN 978-1786493644

A thoroughly enjoyable read, and a beautifully illustrated practical, cultural and historical guide to some of the most common trees in our cities.

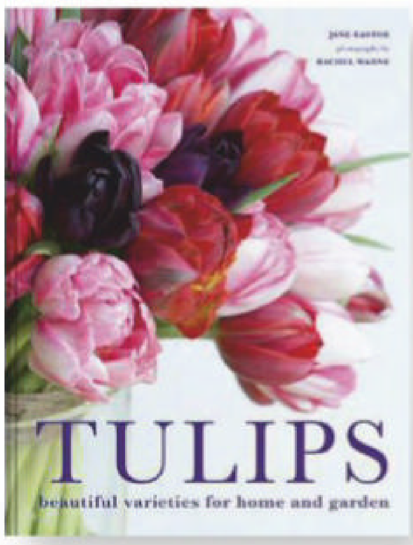
Reviewer Tony Kirkham is head of the Arboretum at Kew Gardens.

Accompanied by fine line drawings, this well-written book takes us on a fascinating journey into the urban treescape. There are more than 60,000 different species of trees in the world, making it impossible to write about them all, so Babbs focuses mainly on the UK, highlighting species such as the Manchester poplar, the Bristol whitebeam and Bournemouth's pines, with occasional forays into other parts of the world.

There are more than eight million trees in London alone, many lining the streets we walk along every day, often unnoticed as we go about our daily business. If we are to appreciate these living things and give them the care and respect that they deserve, we will benefit by having a little more understanding of where they grow naturally, the historical events they have witnessed and the folklore that surrounds them. Most importantly, we can learn from what these living sculptures have provided us with in the past and what they continue to contribute to our everyday lives, from medicine and art to furniture and firewood.

This lovely book does just that in 21 easy-to-read sections, starting with alders, which enhance soil fertility, and finishing with yews, some of the world's longest-lived trees that have provided us with anti-tumour alkaloids for the development of important chemotherapy drugs. At the end of each section there are additional facts about other, closely related, species – information that is worth knowing but does not fit naturally into the standard text. These absorbing snippets add a certain charm to the book.

We can never know enough about our urban forests, and this book will make us look in more detail, and with more intrigue, at our 'sylvan cities'.



TULIPS: BEAUTIFUL VARIETIES
FOR HOME AND GARDEN
by Jane Eastoe,
photography by
Rachel Warne

Pavilion Books, £20
ISBN 978-1911624288

A useful compendium of tulip imagery and information, bringing together 50 cultivars that illustrate the flower's breadth and beauty.

Reviewer Rosanna Morris is a freelance journalist.

To anyone who has only seen gaudy examples wrapped in cellophane or standing to attention in town parks, tulips may seem somewhat limited as a flower. But to see them in Jane Eastoe's book is to really appreciate their magnificence. The book works as a beautifully illustrated catalogue listing 50 of the author's favourite tulips, with the bulk of the text dedicated to individual profiles detailing appearance, flowering time and height. For each description, there is at least one full-page portrait of the tulip in question, shot by Rachel Warne. *Tulipa* 'La Belle Époque' unfurls in pastel shades, while the ruffled, purple-red petals of 'Negrita Parrot' ripple with intensity. Eastoe's narratives are a delight – 'Abba' is 'a ruffled can-can dancer's petticoat of a bloom', while 'Artist' is 'a painterly tulip that shifts through a wonderful colour palette like a Turner painting'.

The introduction is hard to follow at first but turn a couple of pages and Eastoe cleverly condenses and imparts the story of the tulip in a simple, factual and interesting manner. Of particular note is the treatment of the tulip's complex history – its cultivation from a species tulip, the impact of European travellers in the 16th century, the tulip mania of the 1630s.

This is certainly a book to consult when planning planting schemes. Frustratingly, there is no list of where to buy specialist tulips, but the book does include a helpful glossary and a good section on growing and care.

All in all, this is an exceptional account of the tulip. The 16th-century Flemish physician and botanist Carolus Clusius is quoted as saying that tulips 'bring pleasure to our eyes with their charming variety' – this book captures that sentiment entirely.

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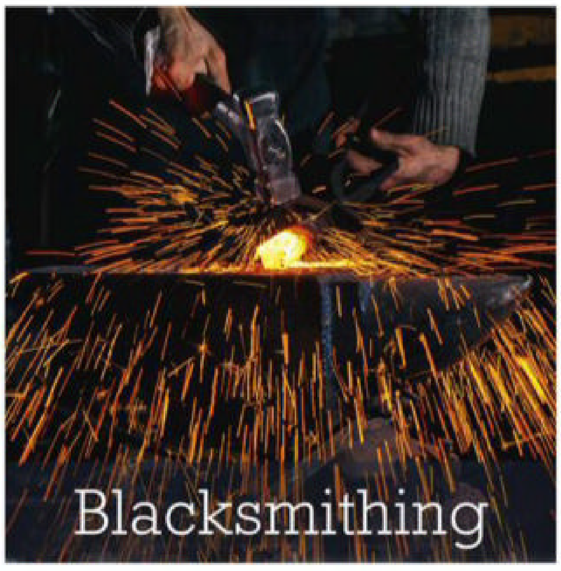
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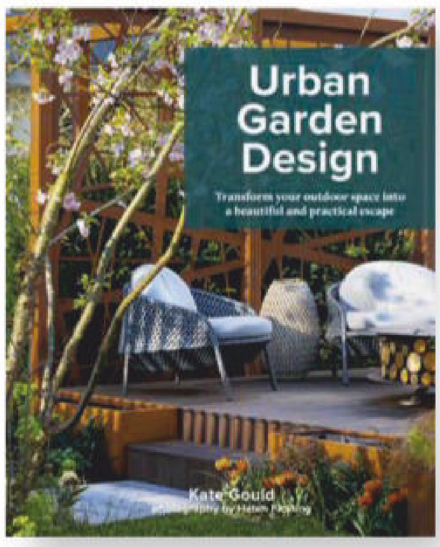

Urban Garden Design
Transform your outdoor space into a beautiful and practical escape
Kate Gould

URBAN GARDEN DESIGN
by Kate Gould

Kyle Books, £20
ISBN 978-0857834874

A no-nonsense approach to garden design, whether revamping a garden yourself, or working with a designer to bring your vision to life.

Reviewer Jane Perrone is a garden writer and blogger.

Garden design books usually fall into two camps: aspirational, coffee-table tomes that are heavy on imagery and light on useful information, and technical volumes that scare off the average garden owner with terminology that is beyond their ken. It is rare to find a book that convinces me that I could come up with a viable plan for my new outdoor space, enthuses me about the process and gives me the grounding I need to ask the right questions of contractors and plantspeople.

With its focus on urban plots, this book covers three main garden types: basement spaces, small urban gardens and courtyards, and roof terraces and balconies. Award-wining designer Gould leads the reader through the design process, from an opening questionnaire that helps you assess your wants and needs as well as restrictions, such as access and aspect, through to choosing finishing touches, such as barbecues and lanterns.

There are plenty of glossy photographs of beautiful urban gardens to inspire, as well as a couple of pages of plant profiles for each garden type. I would have liked more of these plant pages, but then again, sticking to a simple plant palette is probably a wise choice for a small garden.

Simple lists of dos and don'ts, and detailed breakdowns of the pros and cons of different materials, including insights garnered from the author's experience of designing small spaces, will help keep you on track as you put your plans into action. Particularly useful are the sections on dealing with existing structures and plants, and design solutions for tricky spaces and boundary screening.

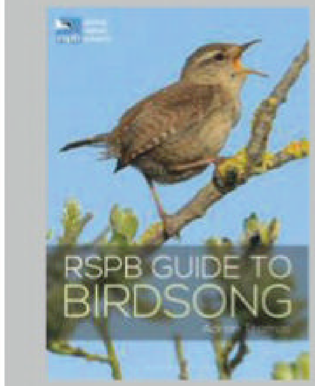
Finally, don't worry if you don't have huge amounts of money to spend: this book will inspire you whatever your means, with practical suggestions for every budget.

Other books

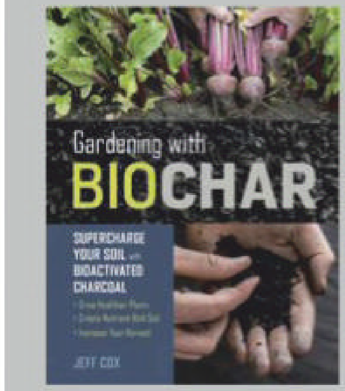
This month's selection spans myriad aspects of the natural world, from wildlife gardening, to botanical art and tree planting.

The Little Book of Planting Trees
Why, Which, Where and How?
MAX ADAMS

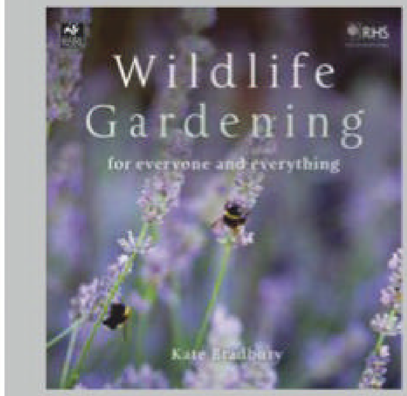
THE LITTLE BOOK OF PLANTING TREES
by Max Adams
Head of Zeus, £10
ISBN 978-1788546270
A practical guide for those who have never planted a tree before, including what to plant where, and tips on caring for trees.


RSPB GUIDE TO BIRDSONG

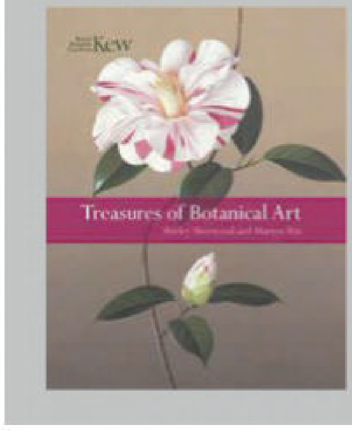
RSPB GUIDE TO BIRDSONG
by Adrian Thomas
Bloomsbury, £15.99
ISBN 978-1472955876
This handy print and audio (CD and digital download) guide will help you identify over 100 songs and calls of 65 garden, woodland and farmland birds.


Gardening with BIOCHAR
SUPERCHARGE YOUR SOIL with BIOACTIVATED CHARCOAL
JEFF COX

GARDENING WITH BIOCHAR
by Jeff Cox
Storey, £14.99
ISBN 978-1612129556
Everything you need to know about making and using biochar in your own garden, with detailed instructions and step-by-step photography.


Wildlife Gardening
for everyone and everything
RHS
Kate Bradbury

WILDLIFE GARDENING FOR EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING
by Kate Bradbury
Bloomsbury, £14.99
ISBN 978-1472956057
From bee hotels to compost corners, advice on how to make your garden, balcony, doorstep or patio a haven for wildlife.


Kew
Treasures of Botanical Art

TREASURES OF BOTANICAL ART
by Shirley Sherwood and Martyn Rix
Kew Publishing, £20
ISBN 978-1842466636
A history of botanical art, its beauty and science, showcasing over 100 stunning paintings.

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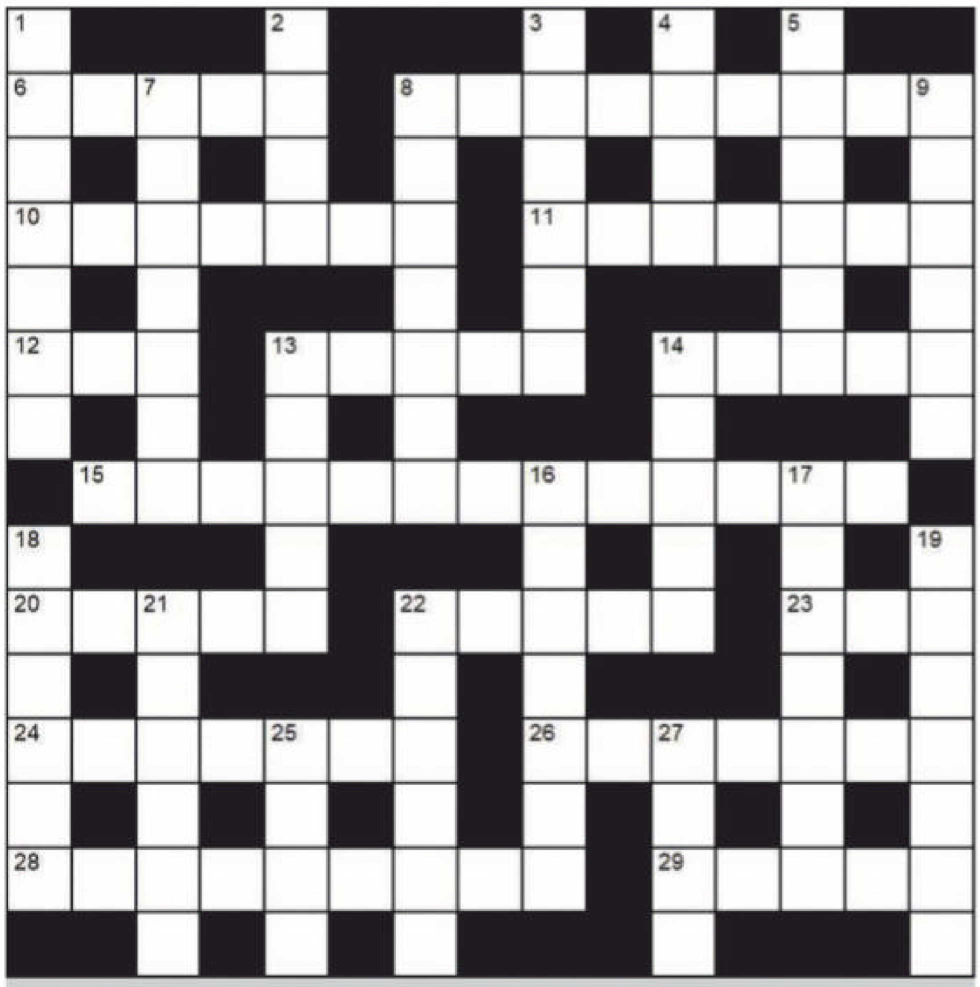
Crossword



ACROSS

6 Golden-flowering cultivar of eg woolly yarrow (5)
8 Male horticulturists possibly spelt Mann (9)
10 Clump of grass, common name for *Deschampsia* (7)
11 Trailing tomato good for hanging baskets – or glass container (7)
12 Fruit cage's covering possibly shows profit after expenses (3)
13 *Fraxinus* trees and their remains? (5)
14 Carol, popular *Gardeners' World* presenter (5)
15 I move currants around for plant commonly called Culver's root (13)
20 Fused bottom petals of eg sweet peas – leeks, possibly? (5)
22 Part of a flower pistil's elegance (5)
23 *Agapanthus inapertus* cultivar – heavenly blue? (3)
24 Reserved… one of Seven Dwarfs series of rhododendron, pink flowering (7)
26 Artist arranged a… species of *Bletilla* with streaked leaves (7)
28 Genus of houseplant aka Flamingo flower (9)
29/25 down Narcissus with double trumpets, also a small fancy cake (5,4)

DOWN

1 Dwarf, evergreen euphorbia: Bond preferred it shaken? (7)
2 Fortune-teller's card almost shows this vegetable in genus *Colocasia* (4)
3 Name of city in western France applied to a small, sweet carrot (6)
4 Red-flowering dwarf gladiolus – very tiny thing! (4)
5 A pink-flowering *Nemesia* – name 'Liege' to some extent (6)
7 Eg a *Lewisia*'s tightly packed cluster of leaves (7)
8 Oriental vegetable aka Chinese cabbage (3,4)
9 Flowering bulb related to *Amaryllis* – sort of perennial, pal removed (6)
13 Vera might go after one of these succulent plants (5)
14 I take fancy *Streptocarpus* with purple-white flowers (5)
16 Genus of small-flowering plants – if sweet its genus is *Lobularia* (7)
17 Another name for *Colchicum autumnale*… 'Parvenu'? (7)
18 Purple-flowering Japanese climber – *ikebana* arrangement (no name) (6)
19 A tropical orchid genus – set clay mixture (7)
21 Japanese water iris, *Iris* ___ shaped as a 'ten'
22 Genus of plants including herbs and colourful flowers (6)
25 See 29 across
27 Yellow-flowering brassica grown for seed oil (4)

Solutions to this month's crossword will be printed next month

SOLUTIONS TO MAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 8 Hosta **9** Lancaster **10** Rye **11** Nomad **13** Bourbon **15** Ballade **17** Exocarp **19** Eurybia **21** Pumpkin **23** Liatris **25** Lance **27** Cupid **29** Hoe **30** Evergreen **31** Thyme.

DOWN 1 Cherub **2** Asperugo **3** Lawn **4** Inedible **6** Stigma **7** Dracaena **9/5** Lemon balm **14/12** Black Magic **16** Larva **17** Espalier **18** Panicles **20** Berkheya **22** Minuet **23** Lupin **24** Stereo **26** Edge **28** Date.

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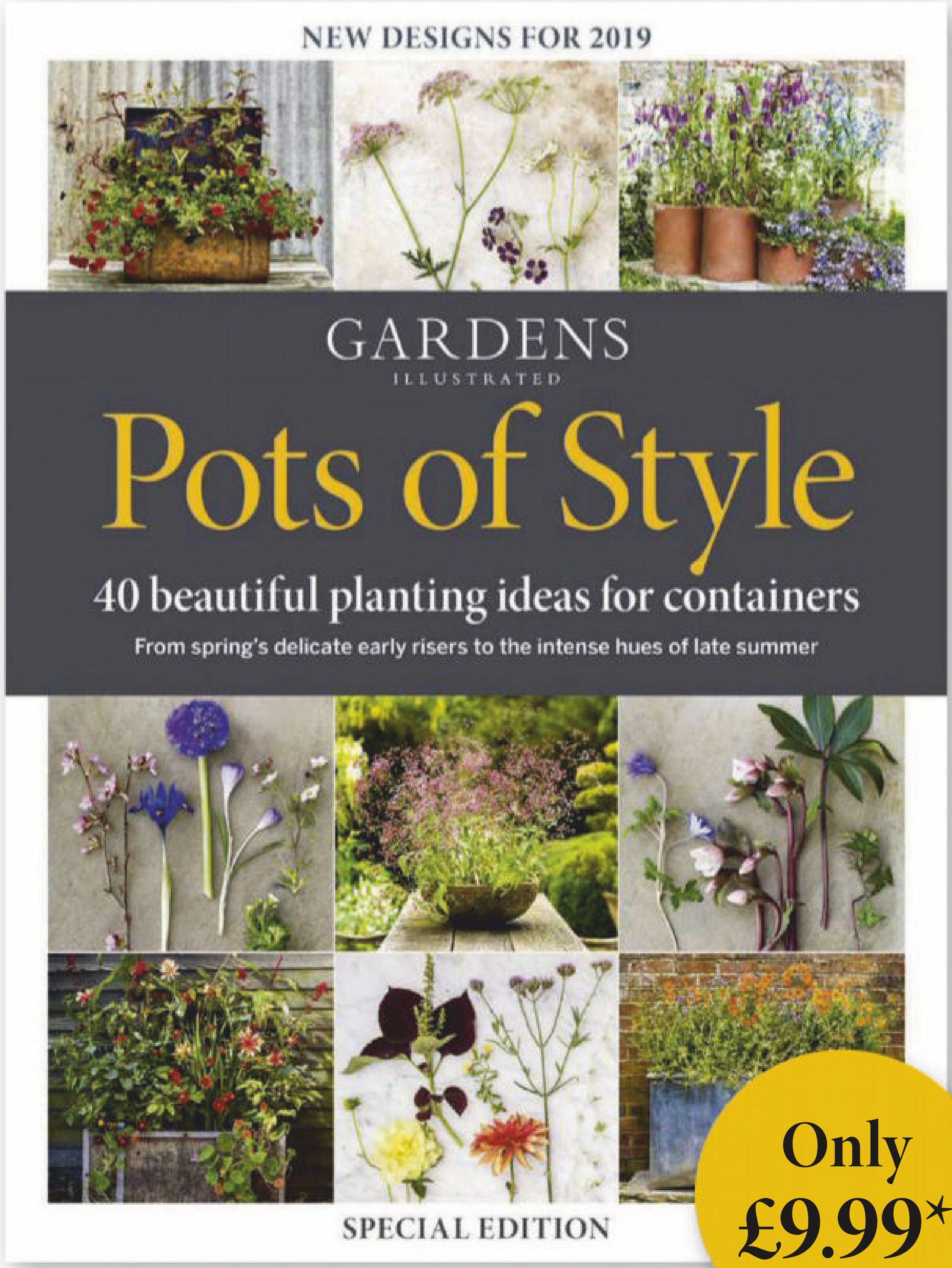

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40 beautiful planting ideas for containers

From spring's delicate early risers to the intense hues of late summer

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Perfect planting ideas for beautiful containers

Pots of Style 2019 is brimming with ideas for creating beautiful container displays that celebrate the seasons. This new special issue explains how best to combine plants in pots of all shapes and sizes and for gardens of all styles, with easy-to-follow designs from some of the UK's leading plantspeople.

Each display comes with a plant list, suggestions for containers and steps on how to achieve the look – with ideas for early spring, spring, early summer, summer and autumn into winter. You'll also find suggestions for some of the most stylish containers, the best planting kit and practical advice on how best to grow plants in pots.

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READER COMPETITION

Win an Atco Liner 19SE V lawnmower worth £1,009

Atco Liner 19SE V.

Atco has been manufacturing lawnmowers for more than 90 years and has earned a reputation for quality and performance. We are delighted to be able to offer one lucky winner the Atco Liner 19SE V – a premium lawnmower powered by a powerful Briggs & Stratton 675IS InStart push-button, electric-start engine.

Fitted with an innovative Twinclip blade with four cutting edges; the leading edge reduces the initial length of the grass with the following edge reducing the finished length down to the desired height. The extra-finely cut clippings are blown into the large 80 litre collector allowing for a 20 per cent increase in collection performance. The large diameter steel rear roller is driven by a heavy duty Hi-Torque cone clutch transmission, which combines light and easy operation with smooth acceleration through a range of cutting speeds. Cleaning the cutting deck after use is made easy by using a hose connection fitted to the chassis.

Supported by a five-year manufacturer's warranty, this lawnmower is an essential piece of kit, perfect for medium-sized gardens up to 50m x 50m in size. Visit the website to find out more: **atco.co.uk**

HOW TO ENTER

We have one Atco Liner 19SE V worth £1,009 as our competition prize . For your chance to win, answer the following question:
In what year did Atco start manufacturing lawnmowers?
a) 1921 **b)** 1955 **c)** 1972

Enter by post Send your answer on a postcard along with your name, address and contact details to *Gardens Illustrated* 274/Atco, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA.
Enter online Visit gardensillustrated.com

Closing date 1 July 2019.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS
1 Promoter: Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited. **2** Entrants must be UK residents aged 18 years or older, excluding the Promoter's employees. **3** By entering, you agree to be bound by all the rules of the promotion. **4** Only one entry per person allowed. **5** No responsibility accepted for lost, delayed, ineligible or fraudulent entries. **6** Closing date for entries is noon on 1 July 2019. **7** Winning entry will be chosen at random from all eligible entries. **8** The winner will be notified within a week of the close of the promotion by email. If a winner cannot be contacted, or fails to respond within ten days of such notification being sent, the Promoter reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner up. **9** The draw is final and no correspondence will be entered into. **10** Promoter reserves the right to substitute the prize with one of the same or greater value but there is no cash alternative. **11** *Gardens Illustrated* (published by Immediate Media Company Limited) would like to send you updates, special offers and promotions by email. If you would like to receive these please write 'YES GI INFO on your postal entry. You may unsubscribe from these at any time. Details of how we hold your data can be viewed in our privacy policy at policies.immediate.co.uk/privacy

READER OFFER

Save up to £27 on this Penstemon Collection from Hayloft Plants*

Penstemons are excellent hardy perennials, ideal for providing long-lived colour and interest from May to October from their clustered dangling blossoms and their attractive, lush, semi-evergreen foliage. Throughout summer stout spires are laden with flowers, which are popular with bees.

Gardens Illustrated readers can **save up to £27**, and receive free p&p on this special collection from Hayloft Plants. Available as a six-plant collection (one of each cultivar), or 18-plant collection (three of each). All plants show are also available to buy as individual cultivars (three plants of each) with free p&p. Supplied as young plants in 14 days.*

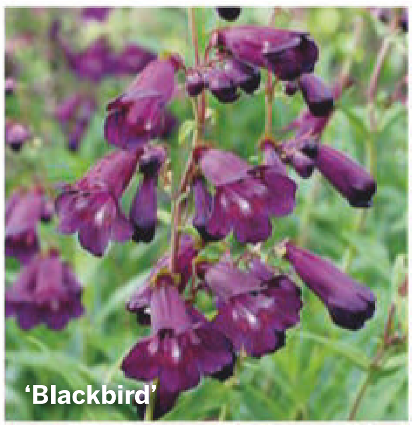
HOW TO ORDER

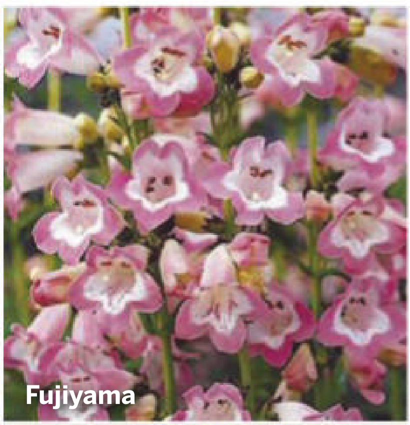
- **By post** Complete order form and post to *Gardens Illustrated* Offer, PO BOX 2020, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 9BP.
- **Online** at hayloft.co.uk/ROGI
- **By phone** Call 01386 426245 and quote code **ROGI19-22**.

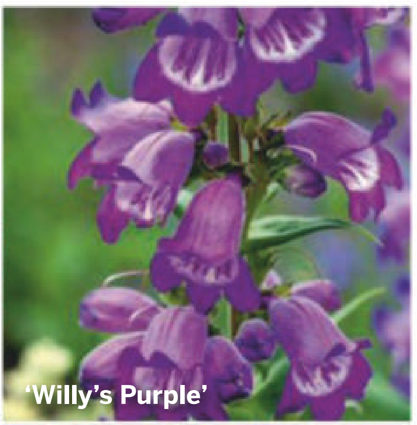
Postage & packing Free (normally £4.95).

Offer closes 28 July 2019.

*All orders will receive an acknowledgement with approximate delivery date. All items are subject to availability; we reserve the right to send suitable substitutes or, for paid-for items, offer a refund. Offer available to UK addresses only, and cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotions or discounts.


'Blackbird'


Fujiyama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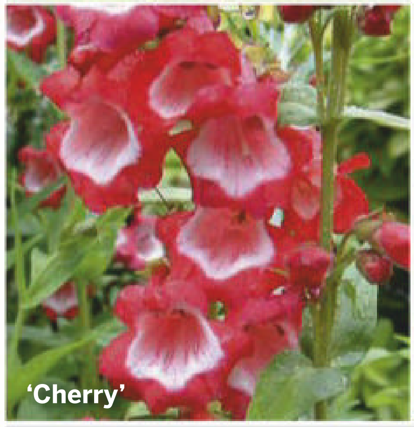
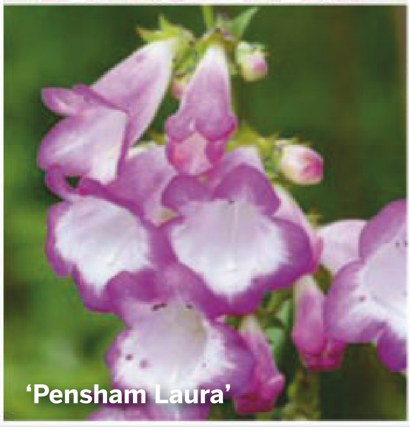
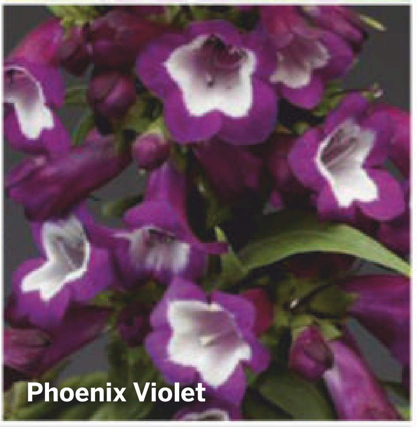

'Cherry'


'Pensham Laura'


Phoenix Violet

'Blackbird' One of the darkest flowered penstemons, with clusters of dark-purple, trumpet-shaped blooms held on strong stems above green, semi-evergreen foliage from May to October, often longer. Height 70cm.

Fujiyama A compact plant with an upright habit that was originally bred to be grown in patio containers. The large flowers are an attractive combination of a solid pink lip that fades to white at the base. Height 60cm.

'Willy's Purple' An imposing plant, with tall stems and flowers that are a dark-wine colour and have a waxy appearance. Originally found growing in Australia. Height 1.2m.

'Cherry' Vibrant red stripes on a white background in the throat of the flowers. It is a vigorous plant in its first couple of years but after that needs replacing. Height 80cm.

'Pensham Laura' Produces clusters of large, white, bell-shaped blooms with pretty, bright-pink edge on strong stems over semi-evergreen foliage for over six months each year from May to October. Height 90cm.

Phoenix Violet Part of a series of relatively short plants with large, open flowers. These flowers are plum coloured with a clear white throat, appearing in early June. Semi-evergreen bright to mid-green foliage. Height 50cm.

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YPC3	***Penstemon* 'Cherry'**	£12.50		£
YPL3	***Penstemon* 'Pensham Laura'**	£12.50		£
YPF3	***Penstemon* Fujiyama**	£12.50		£
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CONGHAM HALL HOTEL

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This beautiful, privately-owned hotel is a stone's throw from Sandringham House, the Queen's Norfolk retreat (open April to November). All 26 bedrooms are individually designed with idyllic views of the garden, which also supplies the restaurant with fresh produce. The hotel also has an award-winning spa, indoor pool, thermal suite and outdoor hot tub.

01485 600250 | conghamhallhotel.co.uk

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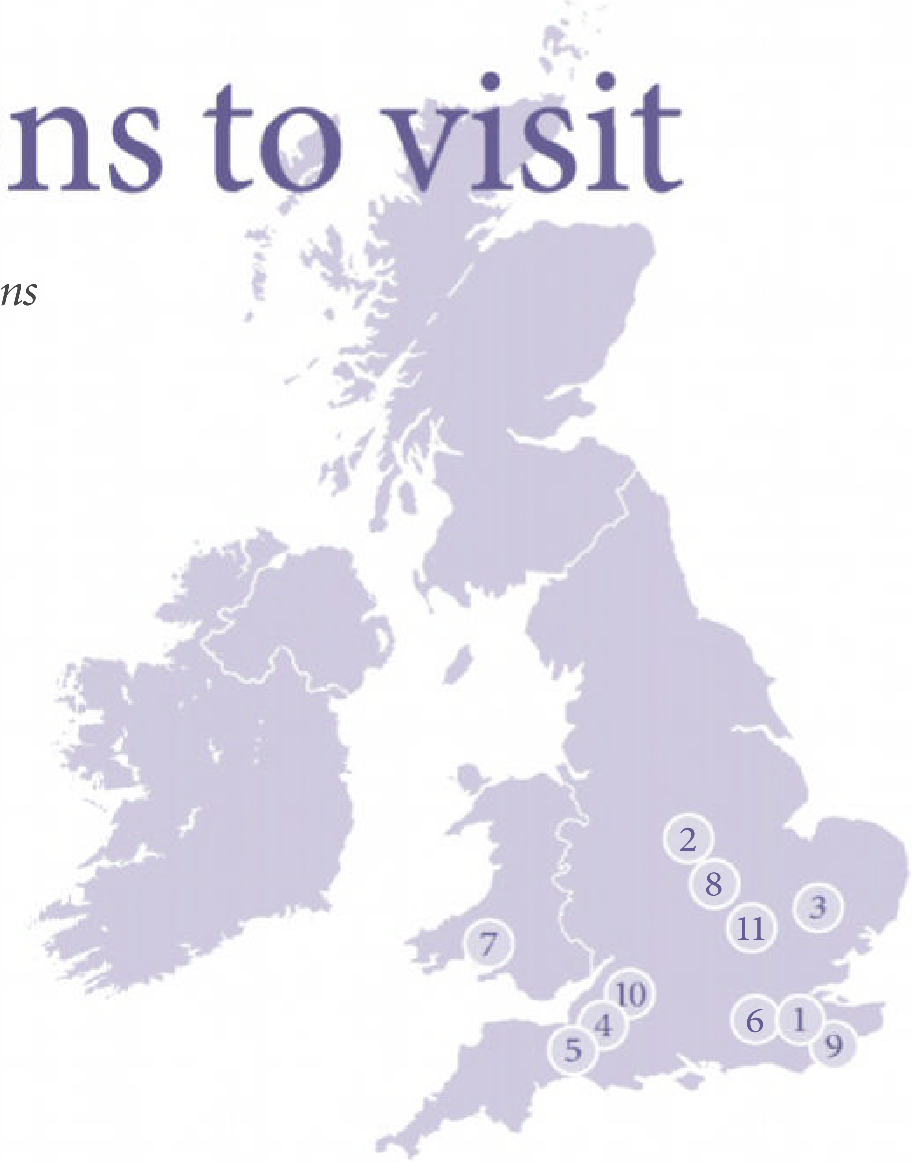
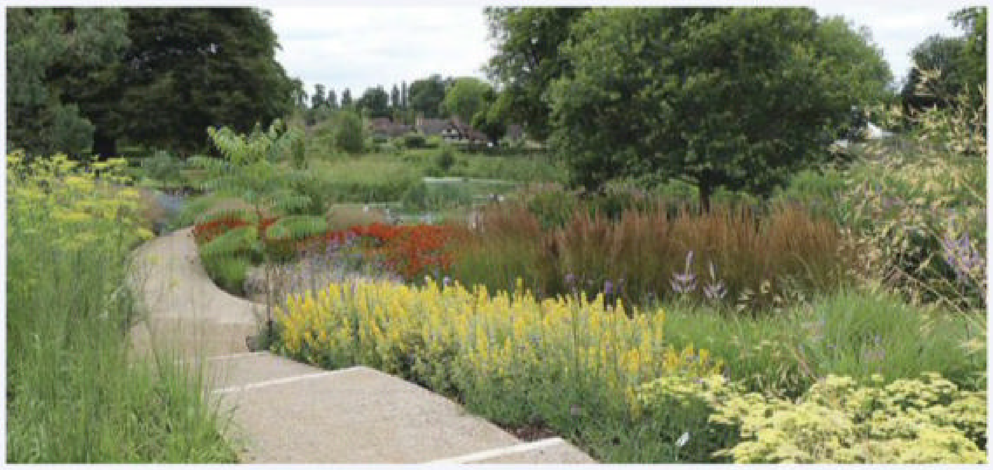
Summer gardens to visit

Summer is a great time to visit this collection of stunning gardens

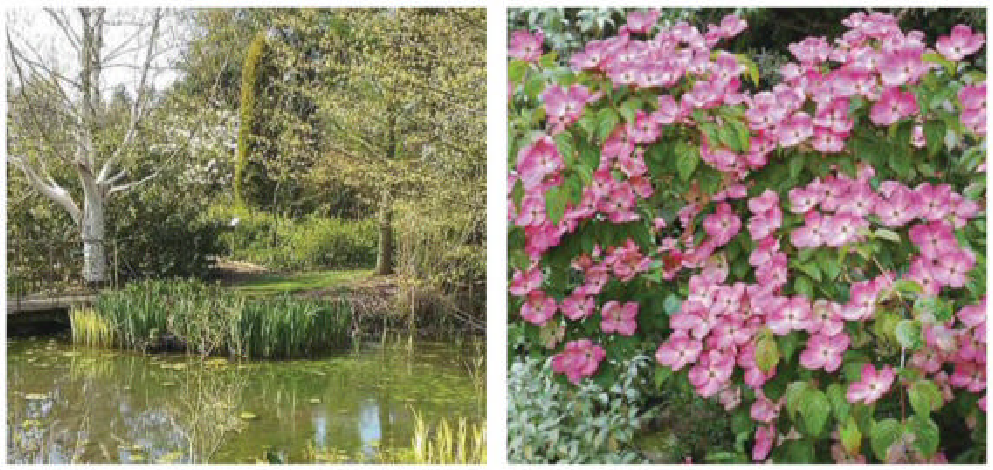




1 HEVER CASTLE & GARDENS

Hever in Bloom (25–30 June) showcases the glorious gardens with floral displays in the Castle and free garden tours. Led by the gardening team, the delightful tour will explore Faith's Garden, a new area of the garden providing 1,200 square metres of perennials

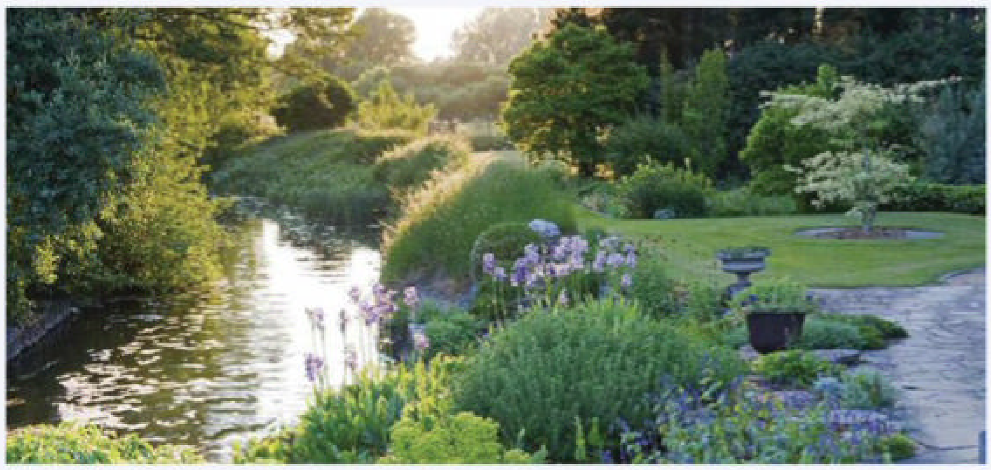
Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG | 01732 865224 | hevercastle.co.uk



2 BLUEBELL ARBORETUM & NURSERY

Visit our tranquil nine-acre woodland garden full of unusual trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted for their superb late spring and summer flowers. Most of the plants on display in our gardens are available for sale from our adjoining plant nursery. We are a RHS Partner Garden.

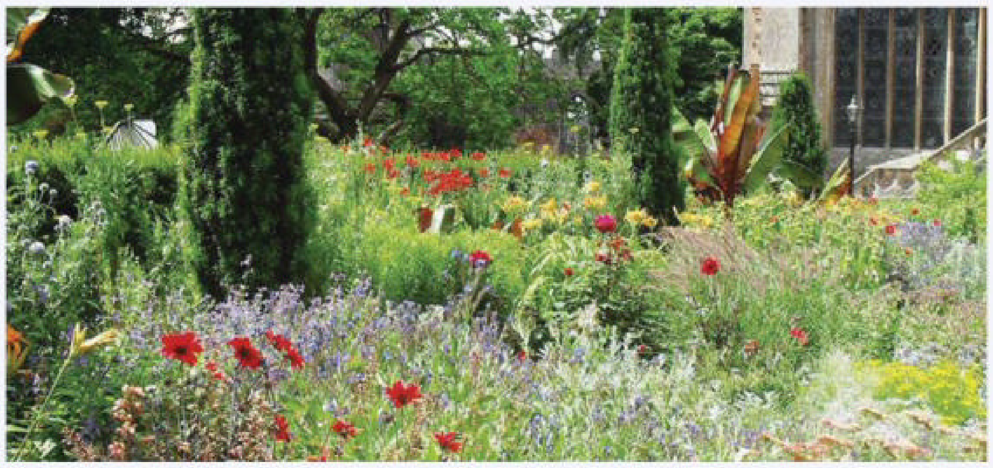
Ashby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA | 01530 413700 | bluebellnursery.com



3 FULLERS MILL, ONE OF PERENNIAL'S GARDENS

Fullers Mill is an enchanting and tranquil waterside retreat spanning seven acres. This plant lover's paradise combines light dappled woodland with a fabulous collection of rare shrubs, perennials, lilies and marginal plants, collected over 50 years by the creator of the garden, the late Bernard Tickner MBE.

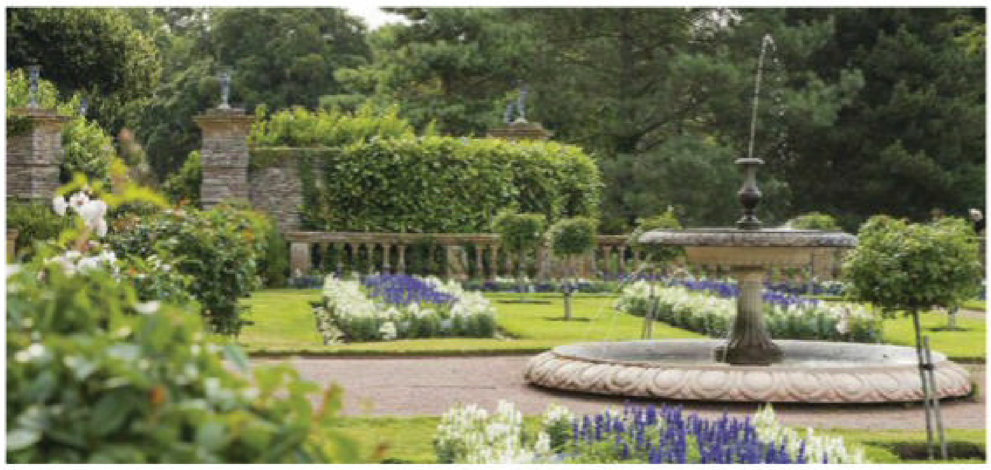
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 6HD | 01284 728888 | fullersmillgarden.org.uk



4 THE BISHOP'S PALACE & GARDENS

Over 14 acres of spectacular RHS partner gardens, including picturesque, romantic, formal and Victorian styles, a wildflower arboretum, specimen trees, alongside waterfalls, well pools, a moat, and a stunning medieval palace. Book now for the Country Garden Festival 14-16 June.

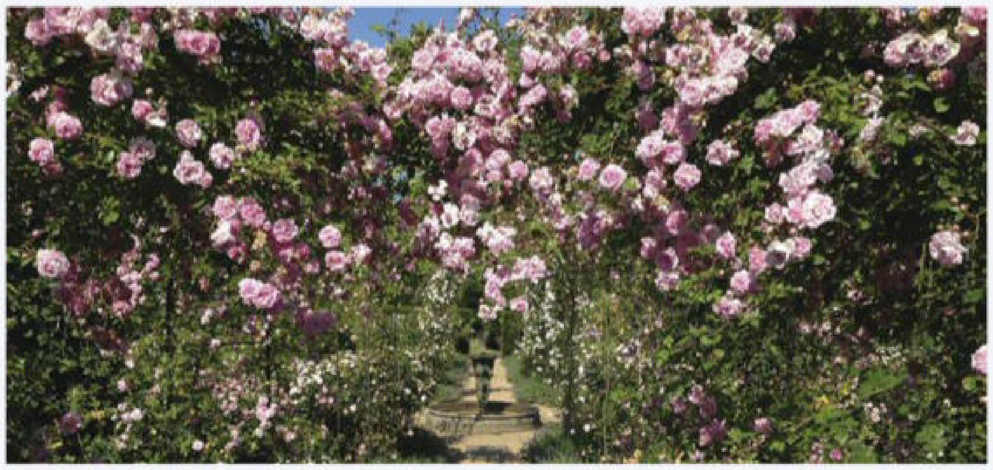
Wells, Somerset BA5 2PD | 01749 988111 | bishopspalace.org.uk



5 HESTERCOMBE GARDENS

In summertime, Hestercombe Gardens is an absolute must-see. The formal gardens, designed by Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Edwin Lutyens, are at their most colourful, sumptuous best, and the Georgian landscape garden is lush, with views from each of the exotic seats showing true magnificence.

Taunton, Somerset TA2 8LQ | 01823 413923 | hestercombe.com



6 NATIONAL TRUST NYMANS

Stroll along the borders in early summer with the fragrance of roses drawing you towards the Rose Garden; scented clouds of lemony Turkish delight greet you as you enter the garden inspired by Maud Messel's 1920s design and planted with old fashioned cultivars, modern shrubs, English roses and ramblers.

West Sussex RH17 6EB | 01444 405250 | nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans

7 ABERGLASNEY GARDENS

Aberglasney was made famous by the TV series *A Garden Lost in Time*, which followed its restoration. Today it's quite simply one of Wales finest gardens; a renowned plantsman's paradise with an Elizabethan Cloister Garden at its heart.

Llangathen, Carmarthenshire SA32 8QH | 01558 668998 | aberglasney.org

8 KELMARSH HALL AND GARDENS

Set in the beautiful Northamptonshire countryside, the glorious gardens are influenced by the work of three 20th century tastemakers: Nancy Lancaster Norah Lindsey and Geoffrey Jellicoe. The garden holds exuberant flower borders, a walled garden full of vibrant colours and a magnificent sunken garden.

Kelmarsh, Northamptonshire NN6 9LY | kelmarsh.com

Image © National Trust Images/John Miller

9 ROSE MONTH AT SMALLHYTHE PLACE

In their finest blooms and bejewelled throughout the garden in their vibrant shades, Smallhythe Place is a haven for more than 120 rose plants and 60 unique varieties. Celebrate rose month with garden tours, new displays and talks from the head gardeners of Sissinghurst Castle Garden and Smallhythe Place.

Kent TN30 7NG | 01580 762334 | nationaltrust.org.uk/smallhythe-place

Image © National Trust Images/Alana Wright

10 NATIONAL TRUST TYNTESFIELD

Tyntesfield is a rare survivor of the Victorian age. Visit the Victorian Gothic house, flower-filled terraces, abundant walled kitchen garden, ornate private chapel, woodland and parkland with views across the Somerset hills. The restaurant menu includes dishes made using ingredients from the estate.

Wraxall, Bristol BS48 1NX | 01275 461900 | nationaltrust.org.uk/tyntesfield

11 THE WOBURN ABBEY GARDEN SHOW

The award-winning gardens will be in their full glory on 22 and 23 June when visitors will enjoy rare access to the private gardens of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford. Tickets cost £16.25 for adults and £15.25 for Concession, *Gardens Illustrated* readers receive 20% off with code 'GI2019' online (Limited availability).

Woburn, Bedfordshire MK17 9WA | woburnabbey.co.uk/gardenshow

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From beautiful craftsmanship to handmade pots and practical accessories, we can help to make your summer garden special

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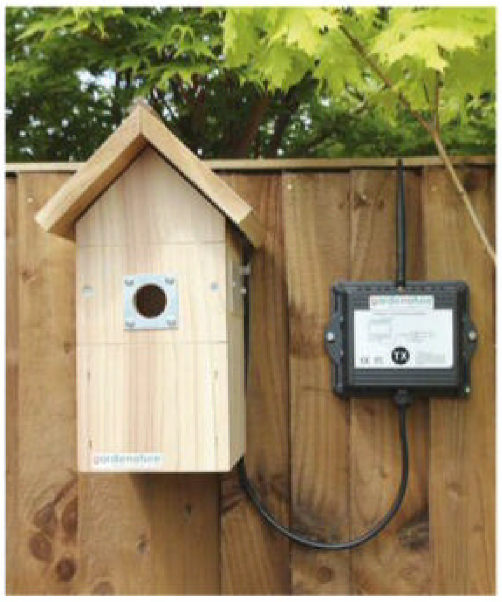

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Nutscene is now offering 22 colours of fabulous jute twine. The latest colours are available now online. Showcasing our latest offers at RHS Chelsea Flower Show. All the twines are from sustainable crops, are biodegradable and vegan friendly. It's the award-winning no.1 choice for gardeners.

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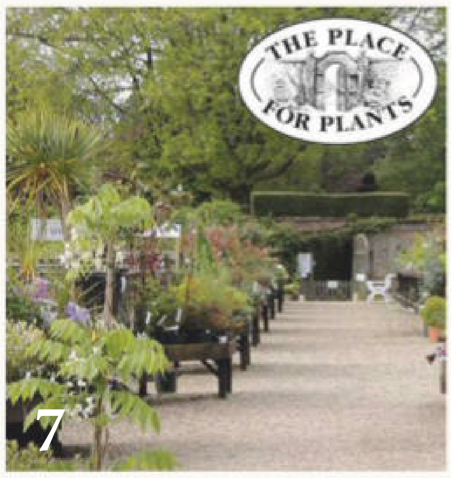

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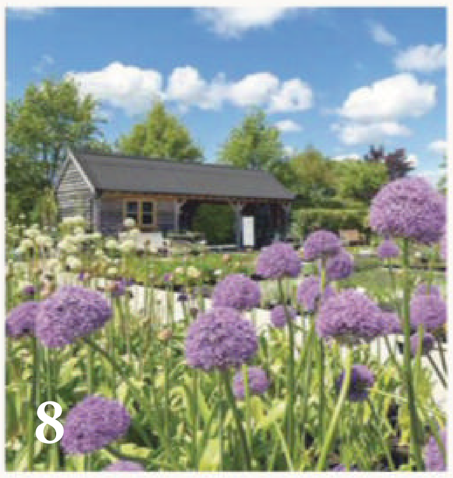
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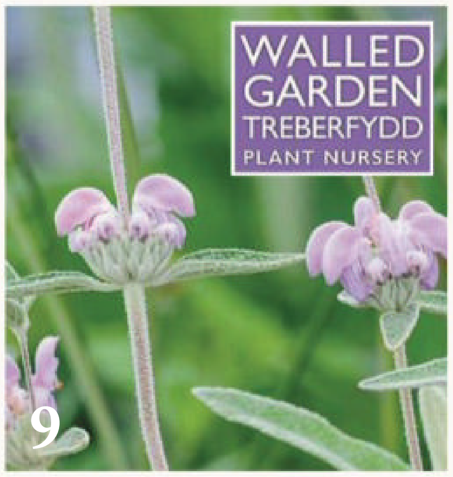

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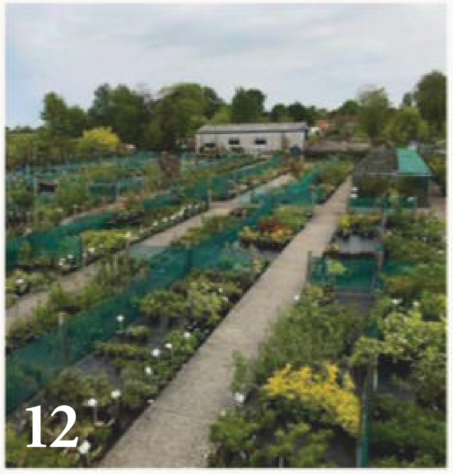
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1. OLD COURT NURSERIES

Choose plants from the National Collection of Michaelmas daisies and a great range of other late-season perennials. Mail order catalogue available. Visit the nursery and adjoining Picton Garden May–20 Oct.

autumnasters.co.uk | 01684 540416

2. BLUEBELL ARBORETUM & NURSERY

Specialists in hardy trees, shrubs and climbers including a huge selection of unusual species and varieties. Informative website and a reliable mail-order service is available.

bluebellnursery.com | 01530 413700

3. NORFOLK HERBS

An established family-run, countryside nursery, growing and supplying naturally raised culinary, medicinal and aromatic herb plants. We pride ourselves on quality plants, advice and service. Online ordering available.

norfolkherbs.co.uk | 01362 860812

4. WOOTTENS OF WENHASTON

Plant specialists based in Suffolk. Growing and propagating perennials and offering a mail order service. Open every Saturday from March to October. Pelargonium open day Saturday 22 June.

woottensplants.com | 01502 478 258

5. EDULIS NURSERY

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edulis.co.uk | 07802 812781

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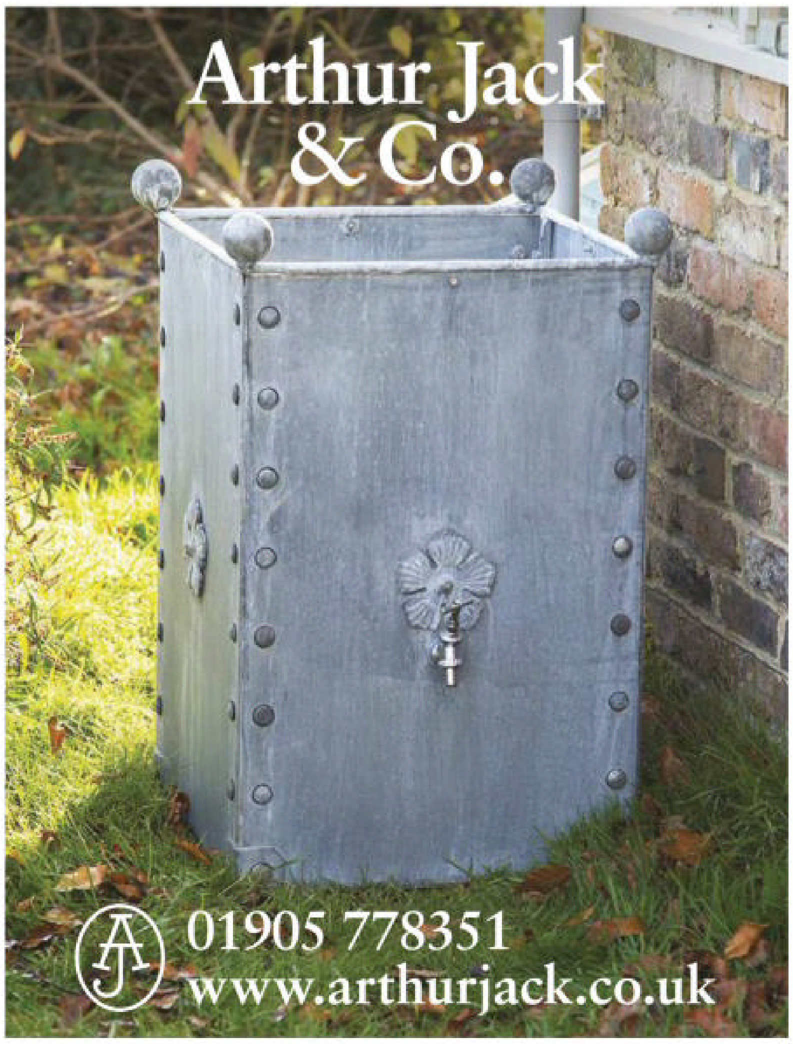

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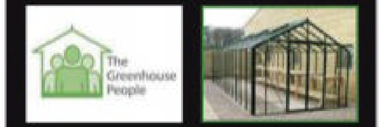

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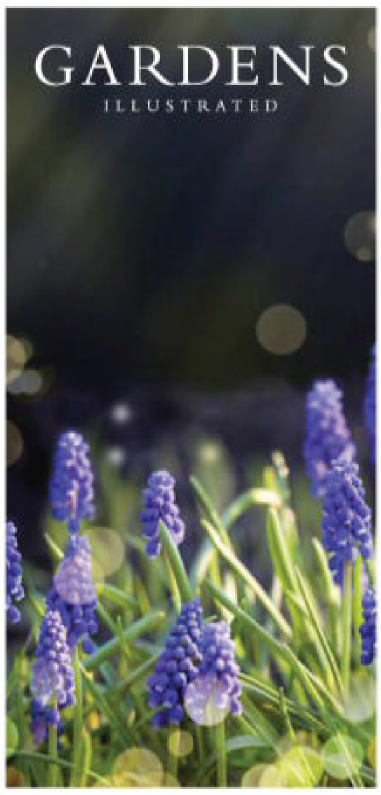

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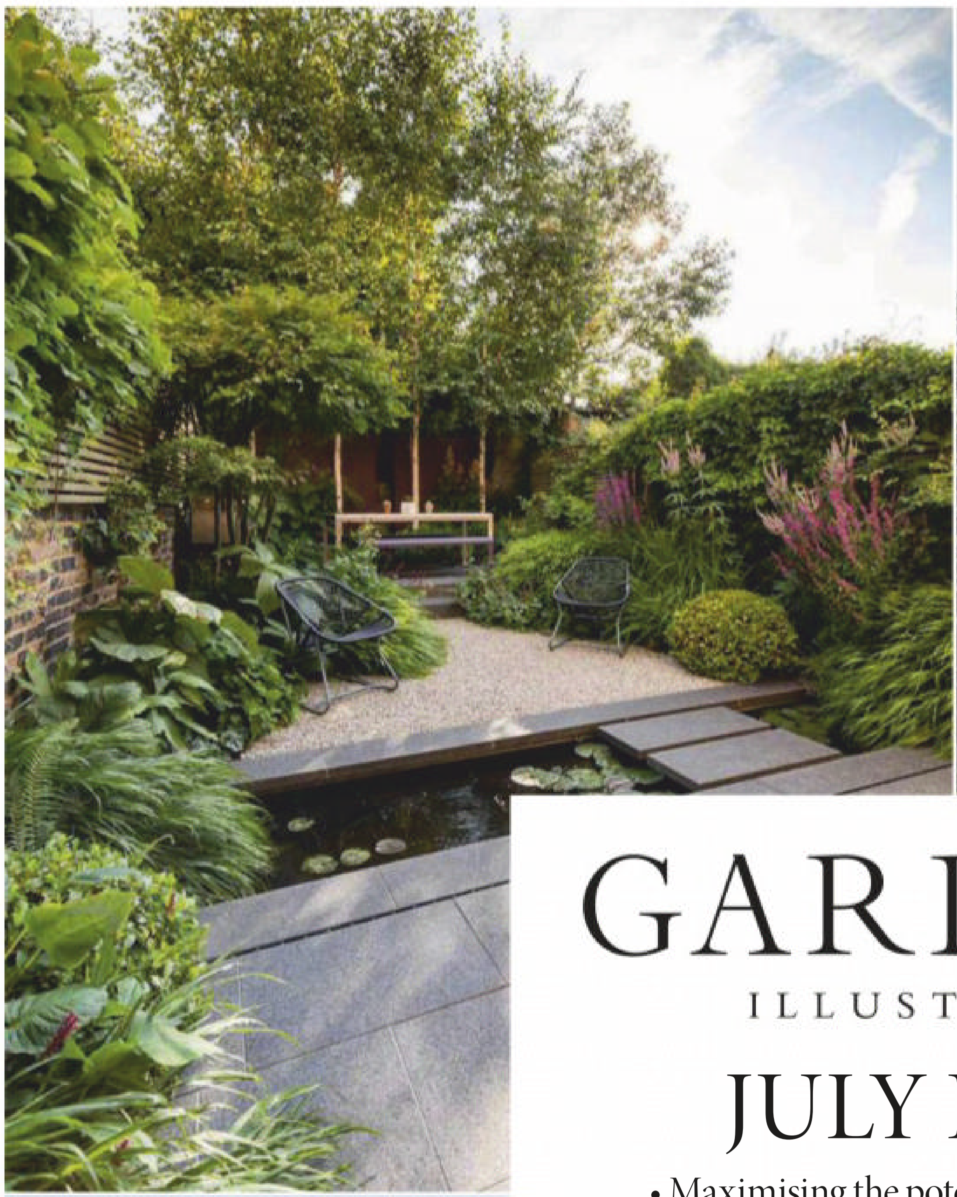
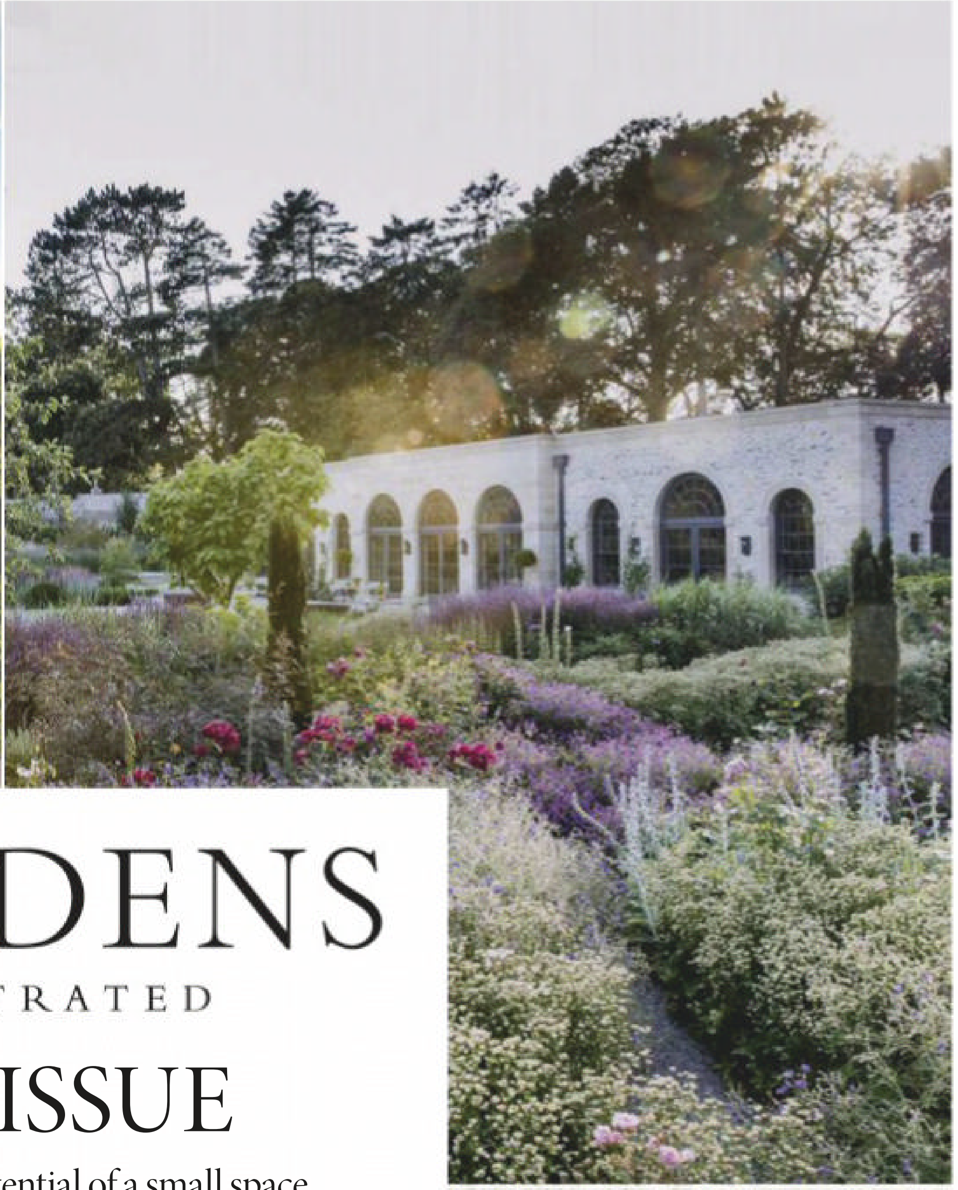
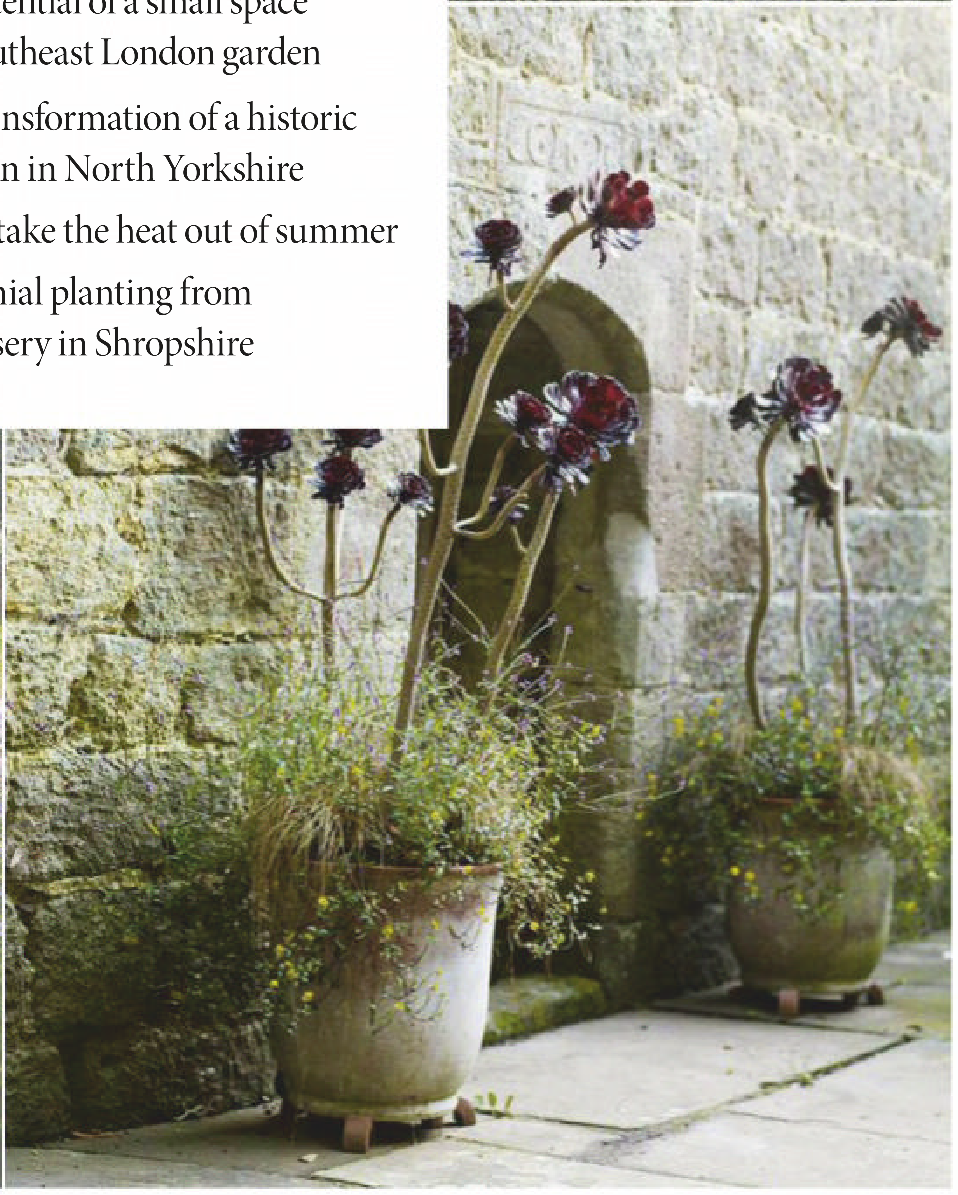




GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

JULY ISSUE

- Maximising the potential of a small space in a lushly planted, southeast London garden
- Tom Stuart-Smith's transformation of a historic walled kitchen garden in North Yorkshire
- Stylish container ideas to take the heat out of summer
- Ideas for perennial planting from Wildegoose Nursery in Shropshire



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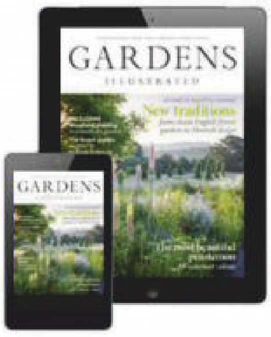

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HOUSEPLANTS

The Great Indoors

Euphorbias are striking and easy to care for, but beware of their irritant milky sap

WORDS **JESS SNOWBALL**
ILLUSTRATION **AGATA WIERZBICKA**

Euphorbias make fantastic house plants. They are extremely easy to take care of: they need minimal watering, will tolerate dry air conditions, and also like lots of light so are ideal if you want a plant to place in a bright window. They also make a striking statement piece with a decidedly exotic look, but some species can grow into real beasts and quickly outgrow their pots. Commonly knowns as spurge, euphorbias come in many guises and form one of the largest flowering genera, made up of around 2,000 species. Their evolution has been diverse and they grow worldwide as annuals, shrubs and trees. The species most commonly grown as houseplants are those known as Old World euphorbias from Africa, Madagascar and parts of the Americas. They are frequently misidentified as cacti but whereas cacti have spines, which are modified leaves and which grow from bud-like areoles, euphorbias have thorns, which are actually modified stipules (small leaf-like appendages, typically borne in pairs beneath a leaf). These grow directly out of the stem and when cut exude a milky sap that can irritate the skin.

Succulent euphorbias are regularly stripped from the wild and traded illegally, so if you are buying succulent euphorbias as houseplants make sure they are from a reputable supplier and are nursery-grown stock.

Euphorbia trigona, better known as the African milk tree, is one of the best and easiest houseplants in my home collection. It is an erect perennial succulent with multiple branches. Its thickened stem is three sided with thorns arranged in pairs, and tiny teardrop-shaped leaves appear on new growth in between these thorns. My plant has grown from around 30cm to 1.7m, and in warmer climates they can grow up to 2.5m. Another succulent, *E. tirucalli,* the pencil cactus, has multiple, thin branches each about the width of a pencil. It is thornless and can grow up to 1.8m tall indoors. *E. milii*, which is native to Madagascar, is a creeping, bushy, evergreen shrub that is cultivated for its bold, colourful flowers.

Cultivation

Originating from dry environments, Old World euphorbias require a fast, free-draining and open growing media with grit or perlite and loam-based compost. They require lots of bright light but struggle in humid environments so avoid growing them in the bathroom. To water, thoroughly soak the compost while the plant is in active growth during the summer months, allowing it to dry out fully before watering again, and feed monthly. In winter, when light levels and temperatures drop, water only occasionally and stop feeding. Their shallow root systems mean that euphorbias can be grown in quite small pots but they are prone to topple over. I repot mine when it gets tall and unstable. Before you begin repotting your euphorbia, especially if it is a larger specimen, you should prepare the area first. I use an a large cloth and make sure I have all the materials and tools close at hand. A thick pair of gloves is essential to protect your hands against the thorns and toxic sap. The thorns can quite easily pierce the stem allowing sap to get everywhere, so be careful. Depending on how pot bound the plant is, gently tease the rootball out of the pot and repot in a slightly larger container.

Larger erect species, such as *E. trigona* and *E. abyssinica*, can be pruned to reduce their size and pruning produces excellent propagation material. Make a horizontal cut using sharp secateurs on the stem and new growth will appear here shortly after. Place the propagule you cut away on a saucer and allow it to dry so that it can callus over, which can take from a few weeks to a few months depending on the thickness of the stem. Callusing is an important process for succulents as it stops disease entering the plant when it is damaged or cut. Spraying with water can help the sap to coagulate and speed up the callusing time. Once it has callused over, pop it in an open, free-draining compost and grit mix, but don't water the propagules until you see evidence of roots or new growth. This can take anything from a few weeks to months, depending on room temperature. Propagation is best done in spring or summer. □

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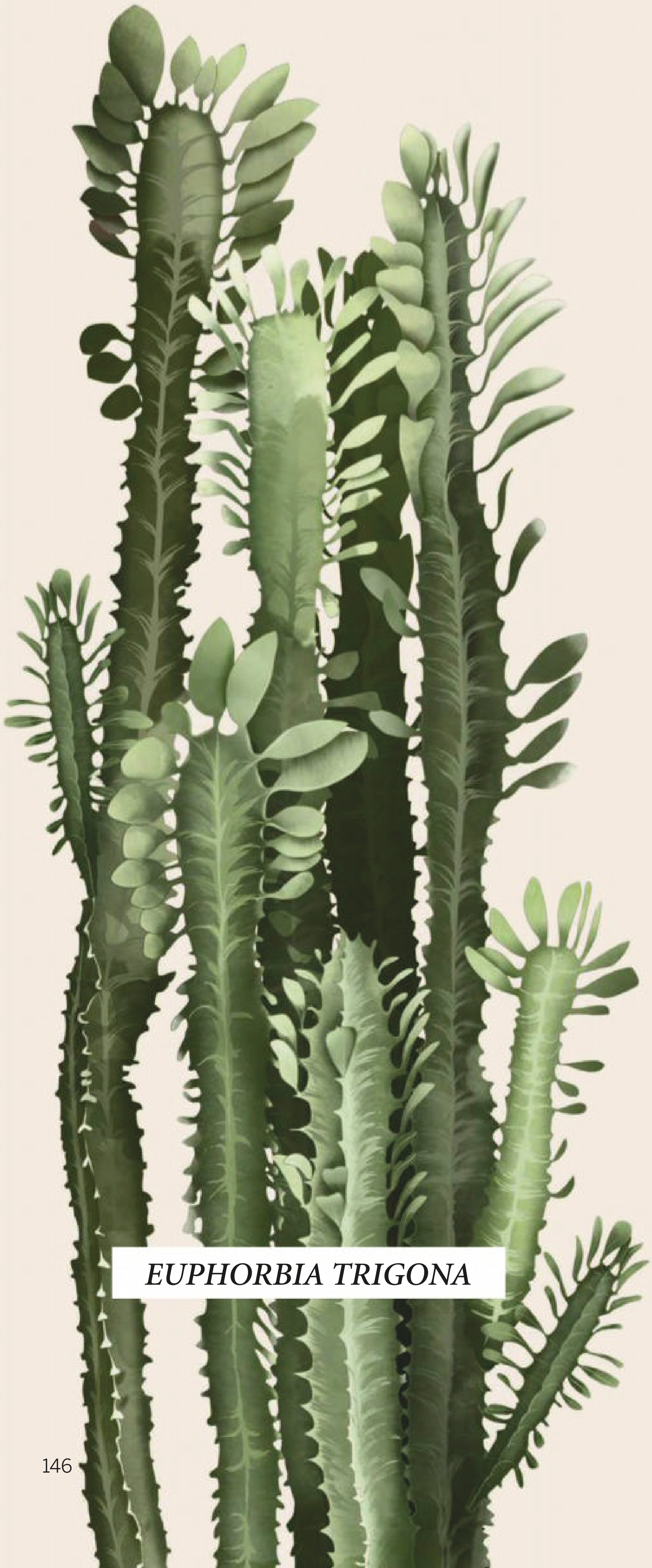
Jess Snowball is glasshouse manager at the Chelsea Physic Garden, London.



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